EXPLORING HIGHER EDUCATION REGIONALIZATION THROUGH A STUDY OF THE ASIA PACIFIC QUALITY NETWORK

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Theory and Policy Studies in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

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Exploring Higher Education Regionalization

Through a Study of the Asia Pacific Quality Network

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Doctor of Philosophy

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2012

Abstract

This thesis investigates higher education regionalization by studying the case of the Asia Pacific Quality Assurance Network (APQN). In this thesis, higher education regionalization is conceptualized in three ideal-types: 1) as a sub-set of higher education globalization, 2) as a regional form of higher education internationalization, and 3) as an alternative to higher education globalization. Theories of international relations and globalization are used to develop a conceptual framework of the norms, values, ideologies, and concepts of regional identity that underpin these constructs. The main research question asks what can be learned about higher education regionalization through a study of the APQN? A sequential mixed method approach is used to gather data from textual analysis, key informant interviews, participant observation, and an online survey to investigate how the APQN bridges national, regional, and international levels of quality assurance in higher education. A methodological triangulation design is implemented to pinpoint the ideal-type of higher education regionalization that most represents the APQN. An embedded case study of Việt Nam’s QA capacity building
activities demonstrates the APQN’s role in one country. The findings suggest that the ideal-type of higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization best represents the APQN. The nature of the APQN as a network for QA professionals highlights the transformative role that globalization is playing within the nation state. Instead of globalization being a homogenizing force on higher education systems, this study shows that higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization is changing the role of the nation state into a regulator for the global market. Higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization does not remove the control of the nation state, but rather reinforces the state’s role as a monitor of higher education for market competition. The study concludes by suggesting opportunities for QA policymakers and practitioners to shape higher education regionalization.
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“Rather than reinventing something, we just picked and chose”

“Need an external push”

“Helping developing economies sit on the same platform”

“People should ask more about the suitability of certain aspects”

“We know that there are good practices”

“A little bit like a family”

“We really just want to talk about our day to day practices”

“APQN offers a network for sharing and exchanging information”

Comparison between GIQAC and APQN Key Informants

APQN Mailing List

APQN Survey

Duration of interest in quality assurance

Participation in APQN events

Sponsors for individual participation in APQN events

Dissemination of knowledge gained from APQN activities

Level of awareness of APQN activities in the respondents’ country/territory

Opinions about possible benefits of APQN activities and events

APQN website

Information used on the APQN website

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Reasons for becoming APQN members

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Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Ruth Hayhoe, for the mentoring role she has played in my life; supporting my intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth throughout the PhD program. I would also like to express gratitude for Dr. Karen Mundy and Dr. Tricia Seifert who sat on my committee, providing pragmatic advice as well as encouraging me through the difficult times. The ideas for this thesis germinated in the independent study course I took with Dr. Jane Knight who pushed me to think deeply about the international, regional and national dimensions of quality assurance.

This research would not have been possible without the approval and support of the Board of the APQN, particularly the assistance of Concepcion Pijano, Dorte Kristoffersen, Colin Peris, and Fang Le. I am also grateful to Dr. Jamil Salmi who allowed me to contact the Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC) Steering Committee members. My translators, Dr. Anh Nguyen and Nha Tran were invaluable to the embedded case study of Việt Nam. I would also like to recognize the additional technical and research support I received from Yuxin Tu, Kirk Perris, and Jack Lee.

The financial supporters of my research include the School of Graduate Studies Travel Scholarship and the Doctoral Completion Award. Heidi & Joakim Essaison and François Hada were my hosts in Ha Noi and Paris, respectively, who graciously accepted me into their homes, fed me, and served as my guide and friend during the loneliest parts of the research process.

There have been many peers who have walked part, or all, of this journey with me. I would like to thank Kara Janigan, Julian Weinrib, Mira Gambhir, and Bryan Gopaul for our regular meetings to keep each other on track. I’d like to thank Mary Catherine Lennon, Dr. Jian Liu, Dr. Li Jun, and the members of Ruth Hayhoe’s doctoral group (including master’s students) for their patience and insight from developing my thesis proposal to analyzing the data. I’d also like to thank Dr. Francine Menashy and Dr. Carly Manion for sharing their experiences with me all along their own journeys. Dr.
Gloria Tannenbaum whose coaching throughout the entire process helped me navigate the obstacles and find opportunities to fast-track my progress. I’d also like to recognize Dr. Anne Wong and Suying Hugh for the encouragement and advice on all sorts of matters, from visas to research methods.

I am so grateful for the tremendous support I received from Joan & Bill Hunt, Don, Lyn & Jule Zacher, and Joni Overton-Jung and Herb Jung who all provided me with meals, quiet rooms to write in, rides to the airport, and the necessary moral support and faith that I could successfully complete this project. I would also like to thank Carrie Silver-Stock, Kendra Nordin, and Gwen Beacham whose calls, emails, and instant message sessions helped me stay positive during the challenging times.

Lastly I would like to acknowledge my family members who have sustained me through the PhD journey: the Maddens, the Moores, the Eubanks, the Hustons and the Pairoa-Amadori family. This research would have taken much longer without my husband, Lee Eubank, who patiently provided me with the sounding board I needed to sort out all the steps of the research process; who answered every Skype call no matter what time zone I was in; and whose technical expertise helped me stay on top of all the details related to data collection and analysis.
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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABET</td>
<td>Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AfriQAN</td>
<td>Quality Assurance Network for Higher Education in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGM</td>
<td>Annual General Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHELO</td>
<td>Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANQAHE</td>
<td>Arab Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Asia Pacific Quality Assurance Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AQAN</td>
<td>ASEAN Quality Assurance Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association for Southeast Asian Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUN</td>
<td>ASEAN University Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUN-QA</td>
<td>ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUQA</td>
<td>Australian University Quality Assurance Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAN-PT</td>
<td>National Accreditation Agency for Higher Education (Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGF</td>
<td>Development Grant Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFMD</td>
<td>European Foundation for Management Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENQA</td>
<td>European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDETA</td>
<td>General Department of Education Testing and Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GGP</td>
<td>Guidelines for Good Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIQAC</td>
<td>Global Initiative for Quality Capacity Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEP</td>
<td>Higher Education Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEP2</td>
<td>Second Higher Education Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>International Development Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFC</td>
<td>International Financial Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INQAAHE</td>
<td>International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPE</td>
<td>International Political Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO</td>
<td>International Organization for Standardization</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOC</td>
<td>Memorandum of Cooperation</td>
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<td>MOET</td>
<td>Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAAC</td>
<td>National Assessment and Accreditation</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NUFFIC</td>
<td>Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAASCU</td>
<td>Philippines Accreditation Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities</td>
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<tr>
<td>QA</td>
<td>Quality Assurance</td>
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<tr>
<td>RIHED</td>
<td>Regional Institute for Higher Education and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>RMIT</td>
<td>Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEAMEO</td>
<td>Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEEI</td>
<td>Shanghai Evaluation of Education Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRV</td>
<td>Socialist Republic of Việt Nam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TQM</td>
<td>Total Quality Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Education, Science, and Culture Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>USD</td>
<td>United States Dollars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VNU</td>
<td>Vietnam National University</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCHE</td>
<td>World Conference of Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCHE2</td>
<td>Second World Conference on Higher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WQR</td>
<td>World Quality Register</td>
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Chapter One: Higher Education Regionalization and the Asia Pacific Quality Network

Over the past ten years regional bodies have emerged as new actors in higher education policymaking, offering the possibility of higher education regionalization. Regional bodies introduce a new level to the local, national, and global spectrum of higher education policymaking and practice. On a linear scale of local, national, and international, regional bodies offer a link between national and international actors. Regional bodies can provide a smaller venue for national organizations to collaborate on norm-setting and policy harmonization that relate specifically to regional needs, values, and identity (a national-to-regional trend). Regional bodies can also give voice to smaller developing countries that don’t have the economic status or ability to participate in international policymaking discussions (a national-to-regional-to-international trend). Likewise, regional bodies have the potential for grassroots initiatives to gain a broader audience (local-to-regional-to-international trends). Since 2003, regional quality assurance (QA) networks have emerged in higher education policymaking, which suggests that higher education regionalization may be a way to negotiate the tensions between national and international demands for QA.

The global-to-local and local-to-global dimensions of higher education have been well theorized in comparative education (Anderson-Levitt, 2003; Arno & Torres, 2003; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002). Higher education regionalization, which involves the regional-to-international, the international-to-regional, the regional-to-national, and the national-to-regional dimensions of higher education have not been as fully theorized. This study examines the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) as a regional actor in Asia and the Pacific in order to deepen our understanding of higher education regionalization.

A regional higher education actor is defined as a transnational actor involved in regional initiatives related to higher education. In many cases, regional higher education actors push forward the phenomenon of higher education regionalization. As a higher education stakeholder, a regional actor focuses on policy collaboration, and possibly integration, within a region. The most visible regional initiative in higher education is the
European Higher Education Area through the Bologna Process, which aims to bring about a convergence of national higher education systems for greater freedom of movement for students (Papatsiba, 2006). The European Higher Education Area illustrates how regional actors, like the European Commission, can significantly influence and move national policy decision-making beyond the nation state.

Higher education regionalization is a relatively new phenomenon that has received limited attention in the field of comparative and international education. Higher education regionalization is a multi-layered and multi-actored process that includes national, regional, and international policies and practices with a particular regional focus. Various actors are involved in this process, such as ministries of education, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), higher education institutions, international organizations, international and regional development agencies, and professional bodies. One of the outcomes of higher education regionalization is the integration of QA policies and practices across national borders.

Regionalization has political, economic, social and cultural dimensions, similar to globalization. Regionalization is the complex process of forming regions, which can be identified as political, economic, and/or cultural projects with an ideological underpinning (Hettne, 2005). As a political lever, regional cooperation augments and/or provides opportunities for regions and individual nations to contribute to international QA policy discussions. As an economic lever, regional integration provides smaller higher education systems entrance to possibilities of competition and cooperation on an international or regional scale. As a social or cultural lever, regional activities build solidarity among nations with similar cultural and historical roots. Therefore, higher education regionalization looks differently, depending on the dimensions, actors, and values involved in the process.

Higher education regionalization can be identified as three ideal-types. One ideal-type of higher education regionalization is as a sub-set of globalization, which involves a top-down approach to regional higher education initiatives that favor international/global actors (Beerkens, 2004; Dale & Robertson, 2002). A second ideal-type is as a regional version of internationalization, which recognizes the state as an important actor involved in regional cooperation and integration within a distinctly regional initiative (Enders,
A third ideal-type is as an alternative to globalization, which would include actively resisting trends of globalization through an assertion of regionally driven initiatives (Hettne, 2005; Robertson, Novelli, Dale, Dachi, & Alphonce, 2007; Sasuga, 2004). These three ideal-types will make up the analytical framework of this study. The intent of this study is to take these ideal-types and examine a regional higher education actor involved in higher education regionalization.

Statement of Purpose

In order to better understand the phenomenon of higher education regionalization and the context for the recent development of regional QA networks, this study will use sequential mixed methods in a single-case study of the APQN to explore the international, regional, and national levels of QA policymaking within the Asia Pacific region. An embedded case study of Việt Nam will provide a national perspective of QA capacity building to illustrate how higher education regionalization actors, like the APQN, play a role at the national level. The study will focus on QA norm-setting, regional identity construction, and values asserted by the various actors involved in APQN activities in order to better understand higher education regionalization.

Guiding Research Question

The main question this study proposes to answer is:

1) What can be learned about higher education regionalization through a study of the APQN?

Sub-questions.

In comparative education there is a lot of discussion about local, national, and international actors driving educational policymaking and practices. This local, national, and global continuum in higher education policy and practice now includes regional actors, as the case of the APQN will illustrate. To answer the main research question, I examine the APQN’s activities and events in relationship with national and global actors. In order to understand the conceptual form of higher education regionalization, my sub-
questions look at national and international actors whose QA capacity building activities overlap with the APQN’s activities.

1) How do international organizations participate in QA norm-setting, identity construction, and values assertion carried out in regional QA capacity building activities?

2) How does the APQN, as a regional organization, participate in QA norm-setting, a regional identity construction, and values assertion carried out in QA capacity building activities at national and international levels?

3) How do national policymakers and higher education institutions in Việt Nam take up QA norms and values from regional and international initiatives to build QA capacity in the country?

At the international level, QA capacity building activities include international development projects and international conferences on QA capacity building. The focus will be on the norm-setting activities of international organizations such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank, and International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and how these organizations interact with regional actors.

At the regional level, the APQN’s QA capacity building activities assert the values of its member organizations, particularly those of its Board members. Regional QA capacity building activities include workshops, online courses, consultancies and conferences. The findings will show that the construction of its regional identity and its role in QA norm-setting is largely in sync with its international relationships.

At the national level, QA capacity building activities include policymaking, legislation, and research on QA. Including an embedded case study of Việt Nam allows this study to explore how national QA actors navigate local, national, regional and international QA policies. Việt Nam is an important piece to this study because of the unique position it holds as the only Confucian heritage society in Southeast Asia. The intersection of cultural affinities to other Confucian heritage societies, such as China, Japan, and Korea with geographical affinities to Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, the Philippines, and Malaysia and political affinities to Laos, Cambodia, and
China provides for a rich multi-dimensional study that demonstrates how national actors interact with each other in regional and international policy and capacity building activities.

As a way of reflecting on the kind of higher education regionalization that is illustrated by the APQN, social constructivism as an international relations theory is used to identify the identity, values and QA norms reflected in its activities. The actors involved in the APQN, both the individuals and the member organizations, develop relationships through partnerships established at the annual conferences, training activities, and joint projects that further higher education regionalization in Asia and the Pacific. What Jones (2007) describes as the “global architecture of education” can be seen through how APQN QA capacity building activities create, reinforce, and are products of these global relationships. These relationships further promote the direction of higher education regionalization the APQN follows.

The three levels of analysis—international, regional, and national—within this thesis is inspired by a heuristic developed by Marginson and Rhoades (2002) called the glonacal agency heuristic. Using Clark’s (1983) tri-partite heuristic (state, market, and academe) of understanding systems of higher education, Marginson and Rhoades (2002) propose a three dimensional heuristic that examines three layers of actors (global, national, and local). Upon articulating the glonacal agency heuristic, they propose characteristics of the relationships to examine between agencies (individual and institutional). I use this heuristic very loosely, by looking at global, regional, and national levels of QA actors. The actors I examine simultaneously represent international, regional, and/or national agencies, as well as their own sense of agency in how and why QA capacity building is promoted in the region. I will look at the key actors in the region involved in QA capacity building and how these actors assert values of the state, market, and academe that underpin QA initiatives.

**Research Issue**

The emergence of the APQN and other regional QA networks highlights some possibilities for higher education regionalization that involve the pull and push processes of globalization. Higher education regionalization could serve as a process of resisting or
promoting globalization. Regional QA networks, as examples of higher education regionalization, may initiate QA capacity building activities based on regional or international priorities that may or may not serve national interests. Higher education regionalization may impact QA in reinforcing certain disciplines and certain types of higher education institutions and in marginalizing local higher education institutions or indigenous ways of knowing that do not conform to QA mechanisms. In exploring the dimensions of higher education regionalization through the study of the APQN, I look for ways that it is resisting or promoting the globalization of higher education. Is the APQN a pawn or a genuine player in national, regional, and international QA policymaking?

Over the past two decades, higher education has been situated as a contributor to national development and to supporting the comparative advantage of nation states in the global knowledge economy. QA practices are one way to steer the higher education system towards market competition. Under the purview of the nation state, higher education institutions are required to meet some form of accountability to demonstrate that certain levels of quality are met that support student learning, industry expectations, and the use of public funds.

Depending on the role of the state and its relationship to higher education, QA reports are submitted to non-governmental or quasi-governmental bodies, in the Anglo-Saxon tradition, or to ministries of education, in the Roman tradition (Neave, 2001). According to neo-liberal higher education practices, decentralizing control to local levels, i.e. to higher education institutions, supports the necessary flexibility needed to adapt to market expectations. Decentralization practices in higher education often include a caveat that accountability reports related to QA practices are needed to maintain local autonomy and control, which illustrates a national-to-local trend that benefits national-to-global trends.

National governments participate in international policymaking or policy sharing, as can be seen with the Organization for Economic and Community Development (OECD) or with regional bodies such as the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), to share information and to discuss how international and regional bodies can support national policies and practice (national-to-international or national-to-regional trends). The reverse may also happen in these meetings; national
bodies may discuss how to support a harmonization of policies and practices that are
driven by these international or regional bodies, thus producing norms such as QA (a
national-to-global-to-national trend). Therefore, transnational actors, such as international
and/or regional organizations are able to have a greater influence on national policies.

There is a lot of debate about how international norms of education are
implemented at local and national levels. Neo-institutionalist research shows how
international norms are being diffused throughout the world in terms of how curriculum
is designed and taught through textbooks and course syllabi (Bromley, Ramirez, &
borrowing and policy transfer, argue that local actors are merely mimicking
“international practices” by adapting local practices to look like international norms
(Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). The power of international actors and policies to influence local
or national higher education policymaking is unclear.

The pressure from international organizations to diffuse international norms often
comes from a few national hegemons who work through bi-lateral aid and multi-lateral
organizations to reinforce educational policies and practices that promote commonality
within their national educational practices to further enhance their comparative
advantage. This trend can be identified as a national-to-international-to-national policy
influence. Hegemonic states, like the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK),
that have internationally recognized higher education systems benefit from robust “higher
education trade” in the form of full-degree abroad programs, research collaboration,
 scholarly exchange, and cross-border higher education. International norms, therefore,
may look a lot like national policies of these countries.

Although there is a clear economic motive for international QA norm-setting that
benefits certain higher education systems, an argument can be made that these systems
have the best quality, and should be modeled. Therefore, international QA norm-setting
is not just based on the influence of major hegemonic powers on policies related to QA,
but also of countries, like The Netherlands, that have demonstrated a sound system for
monitoring quality that meets regional and international expectations as well as local
needs (institutional autonomy) and national (economic and political) needs (Van Berkel
& Wolhagen, 2002).
As transnational organizations, regional networks such as the APQN are changing the scope and scale of higher education policy making. The involvement of regional actors in higher education policy making, particularly in QA policy making, offers new possibilities and risks for the governance of higher education systems.

The APQN is an important regional higher education actor because it serves a large geographical area with half of the world’s population. As one of five regional QA networks that have been established in the past decade, the APQN supports the development of QA through networking activities, online resources, internships and workshops related to QA capacity building. Building QA capacity in Asia and the Pacific is perceived as a necessity to meet the pressures from globalization to rapidly transform higher education systems in developing countries and enable them to meet market demands.

**Quality Assurance as the Lens to Study Higher Education Regionalization**

Within the past two decades, policies and practices of QA in higher education have received increased visibility across the globe. International and regional QA bodies have been established to assist QA professionals build capacity within their national systems. Membership in these regional and international networks is growing. For example, in 1991 INQAAHE started with eight members. Today, two decades later, INQAAHE has grown to over 200 members, mostly from developing countries with new national QA agencies. The attraction to INQAAHE, especially from developing countries, hints at a phenomenon of international and/or regional multi-lateral organizations playing an influential role in national policies and practices.

QA networks provide a forum for discussing QA across civilizations, identifying common and diverging notions of teaching, learning, research and excellence. These networks can provide examples of how different civilizations share practices of QA, as well as how they assert culturally diverse concepts of QA. Regional QA networks are also resources on the international stage for their ability to address gaps within and between countries. Participation by regional QA networks in international fora and initiatives offers the possibility of an expanded notion of QA in higher education. Little is known about the multiple levels of actors in QA and how they interact within regional
networks. This study contributes to the understanding of the multiplicity of regional QA networks.

QA can have positive and negative consequences on national higher education systems. QA policymakers contend that increasing the quality of higher education provision can improve students’ life chances as well as encourage national economic development (Damme, 2001; El-Khawas, DePietro-Jurand, & Holm-Nielsen, 1998). QA policies are promoted as being able to protect students and parents from investing in poor quality higher education (Fielden & LaRocque, 2008; OECD & UNESCO, 2005). Instituting QA practices also provides accountability for the use of public and private funding (Stenstaker & Harvey, 2010). QA secures a baseline for measuring and monitoring the quality of higher education institutions in order to promote the exchange of students and scholars, which increases internationalization and regionalization efforts (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Kettunen, 2008).

Although QA policies and practices have many well meaning intentions, some practices undermine institutional autonomy by the increased level of government control over how an institution handles its affairs. QA mechanisms also have the potential to weaken academic freedom through an emphasis on student evaluations and/or peer-reviews that favor traditional and orthodox teaching and research methods (Magnusson, 1999; Skolnik, 2007). QA mechanisms, like performance indicators, tend to marginalize disciplines that are not easily measurable within a QA scheme (Polster & Newson, 1998). For instance, indigenous ways of knowing with different epistemological underpinnings may struggle to survive under a QA regime (Madden, 2007).

QA often involves borrowing or adopting “good practices,” known as educational transfer. Many good practices may come from countries with different historical, philosophical, and political expectations for higher education, however, if local context is not considered, the intent of policy transfer may not be met.

Regional QA networks, like the APQN can offer the opportunity to test out “good practices” with different historical and epistemological roots, as well as to identify new practices that are compatible to regional values. Regional QA networks also offer the opportunity to assert new norms of QA at international, sub-regional, and national levels.
Definitions of Key Terminology

Quality assurance.

QA is the regulation, development, and enhancement of quality mechanisms that demonstrates to the stakeholder (e.g., policy maker, university administrator, industry, parent, student, etc.) that the input, process, output, and outcomes meet internal expectations (Brennan & Shah, 2000; Harvey, 2009). QA practices include internal and external evaluations. The assumption of QA is that an external body will make the quality judgment (Westerheijden, Brennan, & Maassen, 1994). Besides making a quality judgment, QA implies a certain level of authority and confidence in the process. The external body making the quality judgment, therefore, has a degree of power to enforce it.

Capacity building.

Capacity building is a term used in international development by international donors and development experts. Capacity building focuses on human, scientific, technological, organizational, institutional, and resource capabilities to enhance the ability to make decisions and address questions about policy choices and modes of implementation to support social and economic progress and sustainability (Canadian International Development Agency, 2009; United Nations, 1992; Vincent-Lancrin, 2004).

There are several critics of the term capacity building. Capacity building has a certain economic ideology attached to the notion of progress and sustainability. Although capacity building is supposed to be initiated and directed by the developing country, the process of capacity building often involves adopting recommended external policies and practices rather than generating them internally, thus creating a dependency between developing countries and donor agencies.

Quality assurance capacity building.

QA capacity building is intended to raise the overall level of higher educational provision. Capacity building activities in QA often develop and establish national policies and practices related to QA at the national level. According to UNESCO’s International Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO-IIEP) (2010e), there are three focal points
for capacity building in QA: higher education institutions, QA agencies, and external reviewers. QA capacity building is often conducted through bi-lateral or multi-lateral agencies.

**Norm-setting.**

A norm is an “appropriate” or “proper” behavior of actors (institutions or individuals) with a common identity. Norms are rooted in social mores established through a collection of practices and rules implicit within a community. Norms may be local, national, regional, or international. There is an evaluative or intersubjective quality to norms seen especially when norms are broken and the community of actors disapproves of the norm-breaking behavior.

Norm-setting is the activity of creating a norm or set of norms. Since norms are “shared assessments,” the establishment of a norm must involve a certain number of actors who agree to the norm. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) recognize norms as having life cycles, which is a four-stage process. For international norm-setting, a norm goes through the following process: 1) norm emergence through national norm entrepreneurs who initiate the idea for an expected behavior, 2) norm acceptance by a broad group of actors, 3) norm cascading which means a tipping point of norm acceptance has been reached that then cascades into more actors accepting the norm, and 4) internalization of the norm whereby it becomes an implicit behavior accepted by an international community of actors.

International organizations play an important role in international norm-setting. McNeely and Cha (1994) identified four areas where international organizations serve as platforms for international norm-setting: 1) the exchange of information, 2) charters and constitutions, 3) standard-setting instruments, and 4) technical and financial resources. This thesis will trace how international organizations, through national and regional actors have influenced the international norms of QA in higher education.

**Values.**

This thesis articulates implicit values related to globalization, higher education regionalization, and QA to articulate the driving forces behind certain regional QA
capacity building activities. Often higher education policies and practices assume a value-neutral position, burying the underlying values assumed in the activities and overlooking the theoretical positions of the actors engaged in these activities. Following the work of Holmes (1981, 1992) and Hayhoe (2007), I look at the values attached to QA capacity building activities at the three different levels—international, regional, and national—to compare and contrast how these values shape the APQN’s example of higher education regionalization.

**Regional identity.**

Regional identity is a socially constructed concept produced and reproduced for a particular means (Slocum & Langenhove, 2005). Regional identity can be defined culturally, economically, politically, and/or geographically. For example, at face value, the APQN takes a geographical definition of regional identity, using the World Bank’s designation of the Asian Pacific region. This definition includes 53 countries of Asia and the western Pacific region with an incredible diversity of cultures, economies, and political systems. The reference points for the construction of the APQN’s identity point to the form of higher education regionalization it takes. One objective of this study is to determine to what extent the APQN has a regional identity and how that identity impacts its form of higher education regionalization.

**Organization of the Thesis**

The thesis is organized into nine chapters. Chapter Two presents a conceptual framework for regionalization and globalization, identifies ideal-types of higher education regionalization, and proposes ways to analyze the initiatives of the APQN in relation to these constructs of higher education regionalization. Chapter Three reviews the QA literature to identify the relationships between the various levels of QA, specifically focusing on national, regional and international levels. Debates around QA in regards to the roles of the state, the market, and the academy, particularly in developing countries are identified. Chapter Four explains the research design and the sequential mixed methods approach used for this study, specifically qualitative methods such as key informant interviews, participant observation, and textual analysis, and the quantitative
method of survey analysis. Chapter Five begins the findings section of the thesis and analyzes the international actors and activities shaping QA capacity building in the region. Chapter Six studies the APQN’s events, activities, and membership development, mostly through textual analysis. Chapter Seven examines the opinions of the APQN members and QA professionals interested in Asia and the Pacific through key informant interviews and survey analysis, to understand their perceptions of the APQN’s role in the region. The findings from Chapters Six and Seven identify the values, regional identity, and norm-setting role of the APQN to pinpoint its form of higher education regionalization. Chapter Eight highlights an embedded case of Việt Nam, providing a reference point for national perspectives of QA capacity building, as well as to understand how one nation state interacts with international and regional actors. Chapter Nine will conclude with tying all the pieces together: identifying the APQN’s example of higher education regionalization as mostly a sub-set of globalization. The survey data in Chapter Seven offers glimpses of the APQN possibly asserting a stronger regional identity, and potentially shifting its form of higher education regionalization from a sub-set of globalization to a regional form of internationalization. In the final conclusion, I will offer recommendations for future opportunities for regional QA networks and suggest areas of caution in regional QA capacity building.

This first chapter has identified the complexity of higher education regionalization, particularly as it relates to QA capacity building. Newly emerging regional QA networks offer new possibilities to assert regional identities and values at both international and national levels. These networks also offer the possibility of standardizing QA in higher education based on international (Western) assumptions. Using the APQN as a case study to explore higher education regionalization provides a window into how national, regional, and international actors in Asia and the Pacific negotiate competing tensions between the state, market, and academe.
Chapter Two: Conceptualizing Higher Education Regionalization

In Chapter One, I discussed some possibilities for higher education regionalization, including the push and pull processes of globalization. Push processes reflect the assertion of a distinct identity through regional cooperation. Pull processes tend to standardize or homogenize higher education systems through regional higher education initiatives. This chapter develops a conceptual framework for understanding higher education regionalization and the pull and push processes related to globalization and the internationalization of higher education.

There are three main sections to this chapter. Since higher education regionalization is presented as closely relating to globalization and internationalization, the first section lays out definitions of globalization and internationalization and illustrates how these concepts are taken up in developing countries. The second section takes up regionalism and international relations theories. International relations theories can help unpack the relationships between the state, market, and academy on a global and regional scale. In this section, I propose ideal-types of the three main concepts of higher education regionalization identified in Chapter One: 1) as sub-set of globalization, 2) as a regional form of internationalization, and 3) as an alternative to globalization. Creating ideal-types will articulate the differences between these three concepts and clarify the actors and policies associated with each concept. The third section conceptualizes higher education regionalization by presenting theories related to globalization and the values and ideologies underpinning higher education actors involved in QA policymaking in Asia and the Pacific. A spectrum of globalization is offered with corresponding QA mechanisms attached to these political, economic and socio-cultural ideologies to show how values underpin the concepts of globalization. Articulating the overlapping values and ideologies underlying globalization, internationalization, regionalism, and international relations theories can make sense of the complexity of higher education regionalization.
Globalization and Internationalization of Higher Education

Globalization is a complex term associated with the rapid advancement of technology, economic integration, and liberalization. Mundy (2005) identifies three general forms of globalization: economic, cultural, and political and asserts that the common denominator among these forms is the integration of societies across previously territorially bound units and the “deterritorialization of social relationships (p.11).” In the higher education literature, Dodd (2008) identifies three concepts of globalization: 1) as an ideology, 2) as trends, such as marketization, privatization, etc. and 3) as the increase in global flows or pressures.

As an ideology, the globalization of higher education looks at the balance between the global economic market and state power, specifically the state’s justification of policy changes based on global trends. The values that underpin the state’s justification of policy changes can highlight particular directions that higher education systems may take based on the state’s approach to globalization. Later in this chapter, a spectrum of globalization theories will be presented to illustrate these different approaches.

The globalization of higher education can be seen through policy trends, such as marketization, privatization, and decentralization (Codd, 2005; N. R. Liu, 2009; Mok, 2000; Welch, 2002). For many high income nations, such as Australia, New Zealand, the UK, and the US, higher education has become a billion dollar market highlighting economic globalization (Harman, 2004). For developing countries, globalization presents many challenges, particularly in relation to the global competition of higher education and the internationalization activities that are often results of globalization.

The globalization of higher education as the increase in global flows and pressures involves the increased movement of, and competition for, students and scholars across national borders. The increased movement of students and scholars often pushes the development of internationalization strategies at the institutional, national or regional levels. The internationalization of higher education, by institutional, national or regional actors, can be either an agent of and a reactor to the globalization of higher education (Knight, 2006). The increase in global flows and pressures highlights cultural and social issues of globalization.
Higher education internationalization is the process of infusing an international dimension to higher education policies and practices at all levels of higher education, from the classroom to policy discussions with multi-lateral organizations. Knight (2004) defines internationalization as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of post-secondary education (p. 2).” In the global marketplace for higher education, this process often requires QA mechanisms. The nation state can also be a central part of internationalization processes in shaping and/or controlling the movement of students and scholars across borders. Where QA bodies exist, policies and regulations need to be flexible to include conditions that support the international mobility of students and scholars (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

While developing systems of higher education navigate the intensity of the flows and pressures of globalization through the processes of internationalization, national QA initiatives are often found not flexible enough to handle new dimensions of higher education (Wende, 1999). Some developing countries do not have QA bodies to monitor the quality within the system, including cross-border provision. In these cases, reputable programs are indistinguishable from degree mills and rogue providers, weakening the entire system. Altbach & Knight (2007) ask “should regional or international frameworks complement and augment national quality-accreditation systems (p. 302)??”

The internationalization of QA also challenges national systems of QA, having a potentially de-nationalizing affect on higher education policy (Wende, 1999). Many international dimensions of QA can also be considered results of the globalization of QA due to the prevalence of the global actors who promote them. Or, perhaps in the case of developing countries, could regional or international QA networks supersede national QA systems? These questions hint at the basis for this thesis.

**Building a Conceptual Framework**

There are varying opinions and definitions about higher education regionalization. Rooted in the concepts of regionalism, higher education regionalization takes on different forms depending on the values and ideologies underpinning regional initiatives and the regional actors supporting them. Regionalism is a constantly-evolving, fluid, multi-dimensional, multi-layered, and multi-actored concept; therefore, I will use international
relations theories to analyze the various forms of regionalism. In order to understand the meaning of regionalization, two terms need to be clarified: region and regionalism.

**Region.**

A region implies a particular geo-political area, or a cultural identity based on a common history, language, and/or religious or philosophical values (Beerkens, 2004). The essence in defining the region is in the commonalities associated with it, therefore, regions can be based on groups, states, or territories (Fawcett, 2005). The scope or scale of a region can be understood as sub-national (e.g. accreditation agencies in the United States), sub-regional (e.g. Southeast Asia), or pan-regional (e.g. Asia and the Pacific).

**Regionalism.**

Regionalism is a political, economic, and/or cultural project that defines and redefines regional space or identity (Farrell, 2005). Regionalization is the complex process of forming regions, which can be identified as political, economic, or cultural projects with an ideological underpinning (Hettne, 2005). Regionalism and regionalization are therefore closely intertwined. Before conceptualizing regionalization, a basic understanding of regionalism is necessary. Regionalism is a term that continues to change and develop, mainly because it is attached to ideology (Hettne, 2005). Loosely defined regionalism is “the body of ideas that promote an identified geographical or social space as a regional project (Hveem, 2006, p. 296).” The development of contemporary regionalism can be categorized in three distinct waves. The first wave started just before the Second World War, the second wave started around the end of the Cold War, and the third wave is currently developing.

The first wave of regionalism was initiated after the First World War with the League of Nations (Fawcett, 2005). It developed further after the Second World War in order to respond to reconstruction in Western Europe and Japan (Fawcett, 2005). Reconstruction depended on cooperation on an international scale, integrating functional activities across-borders such as trade, investment, and communication (Jackson & Sorensen, 2007). Regional integration during this time opened up opportunities for liberal
theorists to track cross-border cooperation, which challenged realist assumptions of international relations (Jackson & Sorensen, 2007).

The second wave of regionalism, called “new regionalism,” emerged in the late 1980s in response to the end of the Cold War, intensified globalization, and the emerging power of the EU (Breslin & Higgott, 2003; Dale & Robertson, 2002). New regionalism is a multi-dimensional form of economic, political, social, and cultural integration (Hettne, 2005; Yepes, 2006). New regionalism requires a very flexible definition because of the complexity of how culture, politics and economics interact.

The third wave of regionalism is currently emerging into multi-dimensional, multi-actored, and multi-layered forms, depending on the regional project and its underlying ideology. Some scholars have labeled specific forms of regionalism such as unusual regionalism (Deas & Lord, 2006), polycentric regionalism (Amin, 1997), or Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) regionalism (Stubbs, 2008).

These varieties of regionalism are based on some core issues: capacity, external influence, regime type, sovereignty, hegemony, and identity (Fawcett, 2005; Fawcett & Gandois, 2010). This variety affects how regionalization—as a process of regional identity making—is operationalized. Therefore, regionalization will have different emphases depending on context and ideological values driving regional integration. Higher education regionalization is a fluid process that ebbs and flows based on how capacity, external influence, regime type, sovereignty, hegemony, and identity play out in regional initiatives. International relations theories can offer different lenses for analyzing these new forms of regionalism.

**International Relations Theories**

Regionalism can be explained by many international relations theories, although the most common understanding of international relations theory associates regionalism as a liberal project because of the push of liberalism to integrate economic and political systems. Hawcett (2005) recognizes how international relations theories offer tools for investigating the forms of regionalism, which will be the main argument in this section. International relations theories can explain the push and pull factors of regionalism that resist or promote globalization.
International relations theory, according to Jackson & Sorensen (2007), can be divided into two main theoretical camps: idealist and materialist. Idealist perspectives include international society and social constructivist paradigms and will be used in this thesis. Materialist perspectives include the traditional international relations theories such as liberalism, realism, and Marxism or more broadly, international political economy theory (IPE).

Idealist perspectives of international relations theory are based in philosophy, history, law or sociology, and assert that ideas, norms, beliefs, and values create structure and rules in human relationships, and subsequently can produce fundamental changes in these relationships. International society and social constructivist theories assert that there are no value-neutral positions that can be measured objectively, and argue that scientific laws of international relations cannot be assessed or predicted, as materialist perspectives contend (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Jackson & Sorensen, 2007). The two theories differ in that international society theory gives more weight to the state as an indispensable and in some ways "essential" element of international relations. Social constructivists consider the state as just one among many social constructs in international relations. In other words, international society theory looks at institutional aspects of inter-state relations, like classical international law, whereas social constructivism is less state-focused. This thesis draws mainly from the idealist perspectives of social constructivism.

Materialist perspectives of international relations theory are based on positivist notions of the social sciences, which claim a scientific, value-neutral approach to state and market relationships. Materialist perspectives measure and predict the degree of power, anarchy, or interdependence that actors wield (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Jackson & Sorensen, 2007). Realism, liberalism, and IPE theory have varying degrees of materialist assumptions in the perspectives they put forward for international relations research. Realist assumptions assert that the state’s primary role is to defend its sovereignty; liberal assumptions hold that cooperation produces peace; IPE assumptions contend that decisions are made based on the intertwined nature of politics and economics (Jackson & Sorensen, 2007).
Jackson & Sorensen (2007) suggest that there are five main international relations theories, which may provide different tools for analyzing regionalism. Realism can assess the role of the state in regional integration initiatives, and how it is constrained by state power (Hurrell, 2005). Liberalism investigates patterns of political and economic integration (Jackson & Sorensen, 2007) IPE scholars debate the potential for new regionalism to explain new forms of world order and shifts in the political economy (Dale & Robertson, 2002; Jessop, 2001). IPE looks at the core and peripheral actors in regional initiatives, and identifies the options peripheral actors have to follow or to resist the domination of core actors (Hurrell, 2005). For example, Asia and the Pacific can be seen as a peripheral actor in the global competition for higher education, particularly in sub-regions such as the small Pacific island states or Central Asia. Regional initiatives have the potential to allow smaller, periphery countries to maximize their bargaining power with international and/or regional hegemons. International society theorists identify regional integration as one aspect of a larger picture of the world moving away from the realist concepts of sovereignty of state and forming a new world polity (Bull, 1995).

Inter-regional activities support the development of international society based on regionally negotiated laws and values that play out in international society. Social constructivists trace how the processes of regionalism establish regional identity, norms, or diplomatic culture, such as ASEAN regionalism (Stubbs, 2008). Social constructivist theories of international relations can be seen as a counter argument to both nationalism and global hegemony (Jackson & Sorensen, 2007).

Connecting international relations theories to concepts of regionalism and globalization provides a framework to assess intended and unintended consequences of higher education regionalization. As demonstrated, international relations theories provide different lenses for examining regionalism, and thus, can be used as a starting point for understanding regionalization as the process of regionalism.

**Ideal-types of Higher Education Regionalization**

Regionalization as a process of forming regions can be understood as how regionalism is operationalized. There are three ideal-types of higher education regionalization: 1) as a sub-set of globalization, 2) as a regional version of
internationalization, and 3) as an alternative to globalization. These three ideal-types build the foundation for a theoretical framework for interpreting regional dimensions of QA policymaking.

As a sub-set of globalization, higher education regionalization would be the formal process of integrating regional policies and processes of higher education in ways to ensure alignment with global policies and practices (Beerkens, 2004; Dale & Robertson, 2002). The underlying purpose of higher education regionalization in this definition would be to promote globalization; to open higher education markets to allow for freer trade, a common neo-liberal agenda fitting squarely within economic liberalism. As a sub-set of globalization, the identity of the region may be defined by international or global reference points. Global, trans-national actors are also influential within this ideal-type. Higher education as a sub-set of globalization can promote economic and/or political globalization. The identity of regional higher education actors within this ideal-type of higher education regionalization would be those who consider their role as global citizens or as global consumers/competitors. This distinction is spelled out more clearly in the next section on theories of globalization in the comparison of neo-liberal and liberal international perspectives and is critical to understanding the distinction between the World Bank and UNESCO.

As a regional version of internationalization (Enders, 2004), regionalization takes on a different meaning. Converting Knight’s (2004, 2006) definition of internationalization in higher education as “…the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education (2)” to a regional form would mean that higher education regionalization would be the process of integrating a regional dimension—based on a shared cultural identity rooted in a common history, language, and/or religious or philosophical values—into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education. Regional identity within this ideal-type of higher education regionalization would be culturally rooted, within a common history, language, and/or religious/philosophical values. Within this ideal-type, the role of the nation state is important.
The internationalization of higher education serves as either agent or reactor to globalization (Knight, 2006, p. 348). As an agent of globalization, this form of higher education regionalization could serve to open up new markets based on a commonly agreed understanding of higher education in the region, compatible with institutional liberalism and republican liberalism, strengthening global identities through region building. As a reactor to globalization, this form of higher education regionalization would be the process of infusing a regional dimension into policies and practices to preserve or protect cultural values from the potentially homogenizing affects of globalization, aligning it at the edges of sociological liberalism and IPE.

As an alternative to globalization, higher education regionalization would address tensions between economic interdependence and maintaining cultural identity. (Hettne, 2005; Robertson, et al., 2007; Sasuga, 2004). An alternative to globalization means that regional policies and practices in higher education actively resist global norms, as realists and some IPE scholars would assert. This form of higher education regionalization practices would expose patterns and relations of production in the global political economy that widen the gap between rich and poor countries, aligning with neo-Marxist and IPE perspectives. The regional identity within this ideal-type of higher education regionalization would be tied to common ideals of protecting a distinct cultural identity and/or opposing power structures that marginalize certain populations. Further examination of theories related to globalization can assist in understanding the ideologies associated with the different ideal-types of regionalization. Figure 2.1 illustrates how these three constructs of higher education relate to globalization and anti-globalization and how these constructs overlap with the pull and push processes of regionalism.
Figure 2.1. Map of ideal-types of higher education regionalization.

Theories of Globalization

Held & McGrew’s (2007) latest edition of their book Globalization/Anti-Globalization: Beyond the Great Divide offers a theoretical spectrum of globalization, which, when taken as an ideal-type, is useful for classifying QA actors (see Table 2.1). Part of understanding the APQN’s relationships to international, regional, and national levels of capacity building and how it exemplifies higher education regionalization, involves understanding who are the actors shaping the policies and practices of QA in higher education, and what are their ideological underpinnings. Although most QA actors sit on the globalization side, it is still instructive to articulate the ideological and theoretical underpinnings of QA actors and policies.
Figure 2.2. Spectrum of theorists on globalization/anti-globalization.
(Held & McGrew, 2007)

Reflecting the liberal vs. realist debates in international relations theory, the globalization spectrum has neo-liberals, liberal internationalists, institutional reformers and some global transformers that fall mainly within the globalist or globalization paradigm Held & McGrew’s (2007). Some global transformers, radical groups and statist/protectionists follow a skeptic or anti-globalization model (Held & McGrew, 2007). Mapping international relations theories onto this spectrum, the neo-liberal and liberal internationalists tend to sit within a liberal paradigm. The institutional reformers and global transformers tend to sit within a compensatory liberal, or social democrat, paradigm. The radicals and some global transformers challenge global knowledge production through IPE paradigms. The statist/protectionist fit loosely within the realist paradigm. Examining each paradigm and the higher education policies and practices each promotes can offer ways to classify the values and ideologies underpinning QA. The international society paradigm spans most of the globalization side of the spectrum, while the social constructivist paradigm spans the entire globalization/anti-globalization spectrum because of its focus on values, norms, and identity which all perspectives have.

Neo-liberal principles minimize the state and emphasize the market as the arbiter of a “borderless” economy. Neo-liberals are considered elite knowledge workers—a transnational class aligned to world market principles that will create a new economic world order (Held & McGrew, 2007). Neo-liberal values focus on economic globalization, specifically free trade, global competitiveness, and restrained national spending on targeted public expenditures, such as higher education. A neo-liberal identity would be as a global consumer, rather than as a global citizen. Norm-setting along neo-liberal principles includes the removal of barriers to free trade, such as fostering norms that promote the free movement of skilled knowledge workers. In QA policies and practices, mutual recognition agreements and national qualifications frameworks can
support neo-liberal perspectives of globalization. Neo-liberal policies affecting higher education include the massification of higher education by supporting privatization, marketization, and commodification (Salmi, 2002).

Liberal internationalists believe there is a political necessity for creating a world order based on international cooperation and democracy, with global institutions as the regulators of interdependence among states (Held & McGrew, 2007). Liberal international values are aimed at political globalization, specifically democratic values such as openness, cooperation, and accountability. A liberal international identity is as a global citizen. Norm-setting along liberal international principles strengthens democratic governance and international mechanisms for greater civic participation. In QA policies and practices, harmonization of QA practices would allow for greater movement of students and scholars that can further develop global citizens. The ideals of transparency and accountability of QA policies align with liberal international perspectives.

Institutional reformers rely on public goods theory and global management theory to seek opportunities for closing the gaps between the jurisdiction, participation, and incentive-based structures of current global governance institutions. Institutional reformers focus on the problems of globalization through policy coordination. Participation in global governance, according to institutional reformers, should include state and non-state actors—including civil society and business—with explicit incentives and disincentives for policy coordination (Held & McGrew, 2007). Institutional reformers would assert that globalization is the condition under which developing countries can rely on a tripartite system of government, business, and civil society to improve systems of knowledge production to a more standardized and transparent system of regional and international actors (Giovannini & Usyal, 2006; UNESCO, 2007b). Institutional reformer values also include “enhanced multi-lateral cooperation,” policy coordination and accountability of institutions (Held & McGrew, 2007, p. 193). Institutional reformer identity takes up national and international awareness of rights and responsibilities. Norm-setting for institutional reformers emphasizes alignment of policies and the contribution of multiple stakeholders in the norm-setting process. In QA practices and policies, multiple stakeholders would be involved in QA policy development as well as with the monitoring of QA of higher education.
Global transformers believe that globalization is not inevitable or fixed and actively seek alternative forms of globalization. Global transformers support a “double-sided process” of democratic governance structures with greater transparency and accountability across national borders, so that citizens and institutions can manage the effects of globalization (Held & McGrew, 2007). Global transformer values include fairness in the distribution of resources, equity, and accountability of those in power. Identity for global transformers is pluralistic, allowing for local, national, regional, and international identities that must be mediated to increase mutual understanding. Norm-setting for global transformers involves reconfiguring international and regional institutions to complement local and national institutions. Global transformers would go a step beyond institutional reformers to lobby for higher education policies that have a redistributive element to meet local, national, regional, and international needs. One example of global transformers’ perspectives of QA is the Chinese government’s Higher Education Quality Project that funds institutions with “strong features” in order to encourage alternative evaluation methods (B. Liu, 2011).

Statist/protectionists contend that the state’s role is to nurture domestic industry, limit competition, and protect language, religion, and a common ethos. Secular nationalists or adherents of fundamental religions typically hold these views (Held & McGrew, 2007). State/protectionists are skeptical about globalization because of the enduring power of the nation state to protect national values and identities. Norm-setting for state/protectionists would be closely linked to national identities and values. Malaysia is an example of state/protectionist QA practices in higher education with its emphasis on protecting language and religious instruction (Idris, 2005; McBurnie & Ziguras, 2001).

Radicals use a bottom-up approach to new progressive politics, belonging to local and global communities simultaneously—resisting and politicizing issues of normative humane governance (Held & McGrew, 2007). Normative humane governance promotes norms of protecting the disadvantaged and closing the gap between the rich and the poor. Radicals value individual agency, social justice, and sustainability. A radical identity would be based in resistance to central, ‘top-down’ approaches to governance. Radicals assert that globalization involves capitalistic notions of profit and expansion, which “…disseminate cultural and ideological tools and provide anchors for it (Tettey, 2006, p.
Higher education in this perspective would be expected to emphasize individual agency and resistance (Freire, 2000).

The three conceptual frames for regionalization can also be identified within Held & McGrew’s (2007) spectrum. Figure 2.3 shows neo-liberals, liberal internationalist, and some institutional reformer policies being closely related to higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization. Some institutional reformers and global transformers can closely parallel higher education regionalization policies as a regional form of internationalization of higher education. Some global transformers, statist/protectionists, and radicals would favor the higher education regionalization as an alternative to globalization.

Figure 2.3. Theories of globalization and ideal-types of higher education regionalization

Using this linear regionalization/globalization/anti-globalization spectrum, and taking these concepts as ideal-types, higher education actors can be mapped. Table 2.1 identifies higher education policymaking actors and the QA policies and practices they promote. Although these ideal-types in Table 2.1 may identify specific actors, it is important to note that the theories of globalization and regionalization should not be seen as absolute descriptors. There may be actors from QA agencies who are radicals, or World Bank experts who are global transformers. Understanding these ideal-types that categorize higher education actors influenced by and that influence the APQN, will allow
this study to analyze the ideologies underpinning the form of higher education regionalization within and outside the APQN.

In Chapter Three, greater attention will be given to the QA policies and practices listed in Table 2.1. Likewise, the actors listed in Table 2.1 will be discussed throughout the findings chapters, starting at Chapter Five. Although the APQN is placed within the liberal internationalist perspective in Table 2.1, many of its members espouse an institutional reformer perspective, which could put it between the borders of these two theoretical frames. This mapping of higher education regionalization against the globalization/anti-globalization spectrum illustrates the multiplicity of actors and QA policies involved in APQN QA capacity building activities and sets the stage for building a framework for interpreting regional QA initiatives.

The first half of the chapter shows how international relations theories can analyze different dimensions of regionalism, and the second half classifies the ideal-types of QA actors and initiatives along the spectrum of globalization and anti-globalization. In this final section, I present the analytical framework I will use to interpret the APQN’s QA capacity building activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theories of Globalization (Held &amp; McGrew, 2007)</th>
<th>Ideal-types of Policymaking Actors in Higher Education Development</th>
<th>Examples of Corresponding Quality Assurance Initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regionalization as Subset of Globalization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neo-liberals</td>
<td>World Bank, WTO/GATS, Multi-national Corporations, Private Providers</td>
<td>Competitive funding structures, International standardized systems of measurement, International rankings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Internationalists</td>
<td>UNESCO, OECD, APQN</td>
<td>Mutual recognition policies, Performance indicators, International student learning outcomes tests, Inter-regional cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Reformers</td>
<td>University Associations, Student Groups, Professional Bodies, African QA Network (AfriQAN), Global Initiative for QA Capacity (GIQAC)</td>
<td>Mutual recognition policies, Peer review, Strengthening legal framework for QA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regionalization as Form of Internationalization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Transformers</td>
<td>Indigenous Groups, Civil Society, Organizations, Student Groups</td>
<td>Alternative measurements of quality, Quality indicators based on democratic values, human rights, and peacemaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Protectionists</td>
<td>Governments backed by strong nationalist or religious factions</td>
<td>QA ensures compliance to protect religious and/or national values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regionalization as Alternative to Globalization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radicals</td>
<td>Grassroots Civil Society Organizations, Education International</td>
<td>QA for sole purpose to level distribution of resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Framework for Interpreting the APQN’s Regional Initiatives

To use the APQN as a case to illuminate concepts of higher education regionalization, I will examine 1) the policies, practices, and structures of the APQN to identify its norms, values, and concepts of identity and 2) its actors and their relationships. Using a loose interpretation of Marginson and Rhoades (2002) glonacal agency heuristic, I will present how the APQN interacts with the global, regional, and national layers of QA capacity building in relationship to the state, market, and academe.

Taking a social constructivist perspective, I examine the APQN’s activities and actors to pinpoint what norms are being established, what identity is being defined, and what are the ideological underpinnings and the values of the state, market, and academy shaping their initiatives. Using this framework to examine the APQN’s QA capacity building efforts can deepen our understanding of higher education regionalization and the multi-leveled actors involved in these activities. Table 2.2 identifies the decision rules and criteria related to the various ideal-types of higher education regionalization and proposes the evidence necessary for pinpointing what form of higher education regionalization most closely represents the APQN experience.

Table 2.2 Evidence for Exploring Higher Education Regionalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
<th>Regionalization as a Sub-set of Globalization</th>
<th>Regionalization as a Type of Internationalization</th>
<th>Regionalization as an Alternative to Globalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actors &amp; Relationships</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Global Consumers or Global Citizens</td>
<td>Regional Citizens</td>
<td>Local/National Citizens or Regional Civil Society resisting forms of globalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policies, Practices, Structures</td>
<td>Norms</td>
<td>Diffuse global norms through QA capacity building activities</td>
<td>Infuse regional policies, practices, and meanings through QA capacity building activities.</td>
<td>Explicitly identify regional norms that are distinct from global norms within QA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors, Relationships Policies, Practices, &amp; Structures</td>
<td>Values</td>
<td>Integration Common Definitions</td>
<td>Common Definitions Harmonization</td>
<td>Cooperation Diversity Respect Sovereignty of State</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Social constructivism looks at how norms, identity, and values are socially constructed by a particular group. In other words, social constructivists in international relations would assert that networks, like the APQN, construct and assert certain norms, values, and a perhaps a regional identity. When building regional capacity for QA (an objective of the APQN), certain QA practices are supported based on common values and definitions shared among the members. The diffusion of these values and definitions could suggest a regional-to-national trend (and vice versa), and possibly an international-to-regional-to-national trend (or national-to-regional-to-international), depending on 1) the influence that regional and national actors give to each other, to international QA actors, and 2) the perspectives of globalization that underpin these values.

Social constructivism in international relations theories can also help articulate the ideas underpinning higher education regionalization. As the introduction chapter illustrates, higher education regionalization and the QA of higher education reflects tensions between the state, market, and academy and between national, regional, and international levels of higher education policymaking and practice. International relations theories and theories related to globalization can help explain these tensions and the underlying ideologies that support certain policies and practices of QA.

This chapter builds an analytical framework for exploring the norms, identity, and values formed by the APQN’s actors and activities. Three ideal-types of higher education regionalization were defined: 1) as a sub-set of globalization, 2) as a regional form of internationalization, and 3) as an alternative to globalization. These three ideal-types of higher education regionalization were mapped along a spectrum of globalization theories. Mapping these theories with the actors and their QA practices sheds light on what form of higher education regionalization the APQN appears to be taking. The following chapter on QA will present the context for the policies, structures and practices that have been established globally, regionally, and nationally.

From analyzing the international and national actors involved in APQN activities and the QA policies, structures, and practices it supports, I will suggest that the APQN’s capacity building activities, largely based on international QA norms, are its norm-setting instruments. The APQN’s self-defined identity is mainly geographical, based on the
World Bank’s definition of the region. This definition of the APQN could be considered an administrative one given by the World Bank and UNESCO, which is void of any meaningful regional identity. The core values that underpin its QA capacity building activities are cooperation, efficiency, respect for diversity, and inclusion. This thesis will show that the APQN seems to fit mainly within higher education regionalization as a subset of globalization, with future opportunities of following a regional form of internationalization.
Chapter Three: Quality Assurance Activities, Policies, Structures, and Practices

Quality… you know what it is, yet you don’t know what it is. But that’s self-contradictory. But some things are better than others, that is, they have more quality. But when you try to say what the quality is, apart from the things that have it, it all goes poof! There’s nothing to talk about. But if you can’t say what quality is, how do you know what it is, or how do you know that it even exists? If no one knows what it is, then for all practical purposes it does not exist at all. But for all practical purposes it really does exist.


The last two chapters have identified the complexity of the multi-leveled actors and activities of QA and the values underpinning them. In this chapter, the QA literature is presented in order to understand the activities—policies, structures and practices—at international, regional, and national levels. First, definitions related to quality and QA are presented. Second, an overview of the many levels of QA is reviewed to demonstrate the complexity of QA policymaking and practice. Third, particular attention is given to QA in Asia and the Pacific in order to understand the context for the APQN’s QA capacity building. This chapter provides the QA context for the rest of the thesis.

**What is Quality?**

The notion of quality has been present since the beginning of the academic guilds (the predecessor to the medieval university) in Europe or the *shūyuàn* of ancient China where the reputation and talents of the scholar and the success of his students were seen as a measure of quality (Hayhoe, 1989; Neave, 1994). Quality is measured at multiple levels of higher education, from the individual (student, professor and staff member) to the international (international rankings, international codes of good practice). The QA literature investigates the dimensions of QA at these various levels: individual, programmatic, departmental/disciplinary, professional, institutional, national, regional and international. Most of the research on QA examines the interaction between these levels, or compares factors within one level, such as the quality of professor and student interaction.
Several higher education scholars have attempted to build a typology of the meaning of quality in higher education. Astin (1980) presented a typology of quality for the “modern university” that became very influential in the US. He identified five main viewpoints of quality: the mystical view, the resources view, the outcomes view, the reputation view, and the value-added view and suggested a sixth view, the learner-centered view. Astin (1980) believed that if higher education institutions took a more learner-centered approach to quality assessment, higher education would have a more elevated status in society. The mystical view is that quality cannot be measured because of the complexity and variety of what higher education institutions offer. The resources view measures institutional quality based on the institution’s resources: students, faculty, and financial capacity. The reputation view is closely tied with the resources view except that it looks at opinions about the institution, i.e. how others think about its quality. The outcomes view assesses the quality of the product that the university produces, such as Nobel laureate researchers, graduates who are placed into jobs soon after graduation, or the high salaries of alumni. The value-added viewpoint observes quality based on the institutional impact on the student, i.e. how the higher education institution, or program, affects student’s lives.

When enacted within a higher education system, Skolnik (2010) points out that these different viewpoints of quality have political dimensions. Different viewpoints of quality favor different stakeholders. Skolnik (2010) describes how a resources viewpoint tends to favor higher education institutions because this perspective encourages the idea that more resources make a better institution. An outcomes viewpoint tends to favor governmental bodies because learning outcomes articulate the expectations of parents (acknowledging public demand) and define the standard of learning that higher education institutions must meet. Educators are wary of learning outcomes because there are factors beyond their control that undermine meeting the of outcomes.

Comparing the viewpoints of quality, Clark’s (1983) conceptual triangle of state, market, and academe is useful. The mystical and resources viewpoints sit closer to the academy’s side, whereas the outcomes and student-centered viewpoints sit closer to the state’s side, and while the reputation and value-added viewpoints sit closer to the market’s side. These viewpoints of quality still do not define quality, however.
An attempt to define quality was made in the early 1990’s by Harvey and Green (1993). They identify five definitions of quality: 1) as excellence, 2) as zero defects, 3) transformative process, 4) as value for money, and 5) as fitness for purpose (Van Berkel & Wolfhagen, 2002, p. 337; Westerheijden, et al., 1994, pp. 16-17; Woodhouse, 2003, p. 133). As excellence, quality is exceptional, representing perfection, for the most part unattainable (Harvey, 1995; Vlăsceanu, Grünberg, & Pârlea, 2004). Quality as zero defects hints at manufacturing principles of Total Quality Management (TQM), which will be discussed later in this chapter. Quality as a transformative process recognizes the focus on development and improvement in higher education. The transformative approach suggests a transformation of the student from one qualitative state to another (Harvey, 2004-2011). Quality as value for money looks at the returns on the investment, providing a strong correlation to accountability practices (Lomas, 2002). Quality as fitness for purpose looks at whether the higher education institution is fulfilling its self-stated mission. This definition is the most popular one used in QA. When performing QA, the institution must look at how it is meeting its aims and objectives and what it can do to serve its mission better (Woodhouse, 2003). The fitness for purpose definition of quality is used by the APQN. Approaches to how quality is achieved and checked are heavily weighted by how it is measured.

The primary focus of quality has been on input, specifically what goes into the university. Quality inputs were mainly considered as the individuals invited into the university such as student admission, faculty hiring, and the tenure process (Brennan & Shah, 2000, p. 2). Once the massification of higher education began, the notion of quality expanded to not just consider the inputs, but also to investigate the processes, outputs, and outcomes (Brennan & Shah, 2000).

Quality Measurement

Measurement is an important element in QA. In the mid-1980s, Conrad and Wilson (1985) classified four main methods of quality measurement: the goal-based approach, the responsive model, the decision-making model, and the connoisseurship model. The goal-based model assesses how a program has performed based on its goals. The responsive model identifies program accomplishments and allows the program
participants to acknowledge the steps necessary for improvement. The decision-making model links decisions to evaluation methods. The connoisseurship model gives disciplinary experts influence through peer review. Skolnik (1989) contends that the connoisseurship model introduces too much bias into the evaluation of programs because the “evaluator is supreme (628).” If the evaluator comes from a different research paradigm than the program under study, the evaluator will not rate the program as favorably as those programs that are more compatible with his or her expertise. He recommends that the QA process is decentralized to allow for multiple centers within the connoisseurship model (Skolnik, 1989). The approaches to quality measurement are therefore closely linked to how quality is managed.

**Quality Management**

In the early 1990s, the terms quality assessment, assurance, and accreditation were often synonymous (Westerheijden, et al., 1994). As the literature and profession grew, certain terms have found distinct meanings. Quality management is a generic term used by Brennan and Shah (2000) to categorize the entire process; it is linked to, but should not be confused with, Total Quality Management (TQM), which is a quality management process used in business production.

**Quality Assurance**

Quality assurance is an ‘umbrella’ term that includes assessment, accreditation, audit, and other quality management and measurement tools. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, QA includes the regulation, development, and enhancement of quality mechanisms that demonstrate to the stakeholder (e.g., policy maker, university administrator, parent, student, etc.) that the input, process, and outcomes meet internal expectations (Brennan & Shah, 2000; Harvey, 2004-2011). In this definition, there is a clear external and internal process of measuring quality. QA assumes that an external body will make the quality judgment (Westerheijden, et al., 1994). Besides making a quality judgment, QA implies a certain level of authority and confidence in the process. The external body making the quality judgment, therefore, has a degree of power to enforce it.
Quality Assessment

Quality assessment refers to all methods used to monitor quality, including processes of evaluation, review, and performance indicators (Brennan & Shah, 2000; Harvey, 2004-2011; Lim, 2001). Quality assessment drives the QA process; the purpose of which is to have an external body evaluate the quality by assigning a grade to the evaluation.

Quality Accreditation

Accreditation is a QA process that provides an evaluation of a program or institution, by an independent (non-governmental) body, which designates a certain status or validation granted by that external body (Brennan & Shah, 2000; Harvey, 2004-2011). Accreditation is interested in whether the program or institution has met the designated minimum standards established by the external body. Independent accreditation bodies are often made up of higher education institutional members. There are typically five steps in the accreditation process: 1) self study, 2) peer review, 3) site visits, 4) judgment by accrediting bodies made up of administrators and faculty who are volunteers, and 5) periodic external review, which includes self-study and site visits.

Accreditation practices are common in highly differentiated systems with a high degree of institutional autonomy. In the US, which has over 100 years of history with using accreditation, institutional assessment follows a ten-year cycle. For the Council of Higher Education Associations’ accreditors, rigorous systems of self-evaluation and quality improvement must be in place (CHEA, 2009). For accreditation bodies recognized by the US Department of Education, an assessment of features related to the student experience must be established, such as student achievement, support services, faculty, facilities, recruiting and admissions, and a record of compliance to federal aid distribution standards (CHEA, 2009). This example shows that often the state, through an arms-length mechanism, sets some of the minimum standards to be assessed in the accreditation.
Quality Audit

Quality audits differ from accreditation practices in that quality audits do not provide a scale of evaluation. Similar to accreditation practices, quality audits are made by external quality agencies. Quality audits are more focused on the process of evaluating quality, not the actual evaluation of quality. An audit simply checks the process that those responsible for quality conducted the quality measurement properly. A quality audit has three parts: 1) suitability of planned procedures to the stated objectives, 2) conformity of activities with the plan, and 3) effectiveness of the activities in achieving the stated objectives (Woodhouse, 2003). Taking the quality management practices from TQM and International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9000, Woodhouse (2003) encourages higher education specialists to consider the use of quality audits because of the flexibility in the process for a variety of programs and institutions.

Quality audits seem to assume a mature level of understanding the processes of quality management. The difference between quality assessment and quality audit is that the external body in a quality audit investigates the procedures used to establish the assessment; the quality audit itself does not provide the evaluation. Therefore, quality audits do not have minimum standards like accreditation practices because audits rely on higher education institutions to define and manage their own quality. Australia, New Zealand, India, and the UK use quality audit practices. Both accreditation and audit practices allow for flexibility in how higher education institutions meet their own quality objectives, which supports institutional autonomy as well as maintains flexibility in the system to allow higher education institutions to meet market demands.

Levels of Quality Assurance

There are several levels of QA, from investigating the quality of the individual student experience to setting international norms of QA established by agencies like the World Bank, UNESCO and/or INQAAHE. In order to understand the QA capacity building within the APQN and Việt Nam, the scope of QA at each level is briefly articulated as well as the challenges that may arise within each level.
The individual level.

At the individual level, QA is conducted by evaluations that measure teaching and learning, and occasionally equity and student accessibility. If a professor receives lower than average marks on course evaluations the general assumption is that the professor lacks teaching ability and skill. This assumption may not always be the case. Magnusson (1999) warns that negative evaluations may happen more often with a course that uses critical pedagogy, which challenges and “…interrogates intersecting categories of privilege and entitlement, and particularly when the professor embodies these dimensions (p. 19).”

Another challenge for professors is the linking of research funding to performance indicators. During the tenure process or afterwards, if professor salaries become linked to the compatibility of their research to the outcomes of performance indicators for the department or the university academic freedom is compromised (Polster & Newson, 1998).

The classroom level.

Care in creating evaluation mechanisms for teaching quality is therefore important to recognize the phenomenon of resistance in the classroom. Critical scholarship that does not fit the framework for QA methods is disadvantaged and marginalized, creating inequity within the institution (Magnusson, 1999). If negative course evaluations deem certain departments that offer these types of classes as having lesser quality, the department then could receive less financial and social support. Not only is academic freedom at jeopardy, but equity and accessibility is also weakened because university students, scholars, and scholarship that hold non-traditional epistemologies may become disadvantaged within the university system. Infusing market principles into the QA mechanisms could shape the measurement of excellence in teaching and learning into a popularity contest between the student and professor. If pedagogical choices and curriculum are left to the market to decide, important alternative pedagogical practices may become obsolete. Lutzenberger and Clark (1999) find that

…methods of evaluation… punish "bad" teachers and reward "popular" teachers with no consideration of the actual classroom practice. Further,
they limit academic freedom for both students and teachers assuming that institutionally-defined evaluations, applicable across the university and not specific to the classroom, have a better understanding of the classroom than the teachers and students working together (p. 9).

Allowing the market to determine the success of the courses and professors may undermine academic freedom.

In China, student choice is affecting teaching practices and textbook production. In 1993, the Department of Teaching at the People’s University of China started a “teaching material reform” in order to design courses and teaching materials that attracted students to the university (Mok, 2000, p. 120). Another teaching reform involves “shingle-hanging” where the same course is taught by different professors and through a variety of pedagogies (Mok, 2000). “Shingle-hanging” forces students to compete for the best teacher, and gives the best teacher control of examinations and reviews. The courses dropped from the curriculum are those with unpopular professors or teaching methods (Mok, 2000). “Shingle-hanging” can lead to the development of “best practices” in teaching, aligning pedagogical practices with the market, as Magnusson (1999) warns. The idea of quality in the classroom must include deeper values of learning such as receptivity to new ideas, ability to think outside of one’s own paradigm, respect for freedom of expression, and the openness to student transformation.

The programmatic level.

Most universities aim to provide quality teaching, quality research, and quality service locally, nationally, and—for some prestigious universities—internationally. QA models for research, teaching, and service must take into consideration a variety of issues. In his examination of the Appraisals Committee of the Ontario Council on Graduate Studies, Skolnik (1989) notes that practices of QA can “…suppress diversity, innovation, and nonconformist approaches to the search for knowledge (p. 638).” He warns that program appraisal systems that have the authority to cancel academic programs should not be given to a few people who may or may not understand the breadth of university disciplines and programs (Skolnik, 1989). If evaluated within an inappropriate QA model, programs will decrease in quality rather than improve. The best QA model within the multi-layered divisions of the university is one that decentralizes
assessmnt authority giving autonomy to experts within the field that is being examined, otherwise known as peer review (Skolnik, 1989).

**The departmental and disciplinary levels.**

Departmental benchmarking and professional accreditation, depending on the discipline, address issues of accountability and academic relations with the professions. If departments have to compete for state funding, Polster and Newson (1998) contend that the university will re-organize departments into categories of high-performers and low-performers. Those departments that contribute to the financial bottom line of the university, with substantial research funding and output, may rank higher in quality than departments that do not contribute financially to the university, such as departments that focus on undergraduate teaching or cultural studies (Polster & Newson, 1998). Skolnik (1989) contends “… instructional programs are evaluated almost solely on the basis of research outputs, with little or no attempt to assess student development outcomes (p. 635).” If production becomes the measure of comparison for QA methods, performance indicators may rank departments whose pedagogies, curriculum, and epistemologies fit the production model better than those departments who do not.

In order to fit into the complex organization of QA systems, universities may structure departments based on what fits best for external examination, rather than on an order that works best for the university (Polster & Newson, 1998). Diversity of academic programs, faculty, and students may be compromised within the university if QA tools are used that have inequitable results for certain academic programs. Department quality, therefore, should not be measured solely on the basis of production and financial outputs. Evaluation of quality should carefully consider the contributions of the department outside of a funding scheme, such as generating new forms of knowledge, service to the community, and collaboration within the university and discipline.

The disciplinary level, which sometimes falls within the department level, includes benchmarking against other programs, being aware of the orthodox and heterodox research and teaching practices of faculty, as Skolnik (1989) contends.
The level of professional bodies.

Depending on the discipline, some academic departments also have to submit evaluations to professional accreditation bodies. Professional quality mechanisms often transcend national higher education systems to internationally coordinate and maintain the standards of professional degrees. For instance, engineering programs and business schools have a well-established international accreditation process that monitors quality standards (Van Damme, 2001). An example is the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), which certifies programs in applied science, computing, engineering, and technology. An ABET-accredited program certifies that students are prepared for entry into the profession or into graduate school.

The institutional level.

Higher education institutions are under pressure to meet the standards and qualities necessary for the many professional training programs they offer, as well as the national requirements for greater accessibility and diversity (Yorke, 1999). Rather than creating a decentralized system as Skolnik (1989) recommends, Polster and Newson (1998) observe that higher education institutions tend to create a central management system, following a corporate model of organization, in order to support the accreditation processes and streamline decision-making procedures. Excellence at the institutional level, particularly for developing systems of higher education, is a matter of 1) meeting of the state and 2) meeting the aims and objectives of the institution’s mission.

QA becomes more bureaucratic at the institutional level, involving the completion of surveys for university ranking services, accountability reports for external or governmental accreditation boards, and benchmarking programs against peer institutions. At the institution level, institutional autonomy and notions of academic freedom must be closely monitored in order to ensure that the aims and mission of the university remain intact. If the direction of the institution is steered towards success on performance indicators, institutional autonomy may be jeopardized. The management of QA assessment at the institutional level creates tension between conformity and diversity (Billing, 2004). Depending on the pressures for accountability, the university may conform to whatever will give it the best external evaluation (Billing, 2004, p. 115).
**The national level.**

A particular challenge for national systems is finding the appropriate mechanism that works within the national culture. Some would postulate that academic culture is more standardized than societal culture (Arif, Smiley, & Kulonda, 2005; Billing, 2004). The measurement of quality at the national level must identify the expectations of the state, such as protecting cultural knowledge, strengthening research in science and technology, or increasing access. For instance, India expects its higher education system to promote equity. Chapter Eight will describe the Vietnamese experience and expectations for the higher education system to support Việt Nam’s entry into the global knowledge economy. One initiative linked to QA mechanisms and increasing access for students is the development of national qualifications frameworks (NQF) in the higher education sector.

*National qualifications frameworks.*

NQFs map credentials and qualifications across the different levels of the higher education sector to provide bridges between these levels to assist greater equity and access for students. The NQF is also expected to help employers understand the equivalencies of employee credentials. NQFs not only help build bridges between levels within the national system, but they can also be the starting point to develop regional mutual recognition agreements.

Many of the World Bank’s higher education projects support the development of national qualifications projects, as Chapter Five will illustrate. Blackmur (2004) suggests that the leveling effects of a NQF distort information about qualifications, which is a disservice to the labor market, and may not actually serve the purposes of equity for which it was created.

**The regional level.**

In order to foster competitiveness in the global marketplace, countries are forming regional alliances that allow for ease in student and faculty exchange. The most famous of these types of regional alliances is the European Union and its Bologna Process and European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students programs
(known as ERASMUS), which aim to harmonize the systems and structures of European higher education and agree on a uniform credit system (De Wit, 2005; Van Damme, 2001). Overarching debates about the European regional higher education space are whether the Bologna Process will have a homogenizing effect on distinct national higher education systems in Europe or if national systems will still hold their distinctiveness within the regional higher education system (Altbach, 2002; Kivinen & Nurmi, 2003).

The regional level of QA often involves mutual recognition schemes at all levels of the QA process, including the recognition of QA agencies. The APQN conducted a feasibility project on the mutual recognition of QA agencies when it first began as a network (APQN, 2005b). It is currently looking at mapping QA policies and practices at the institutional level (APQN, 2010a). Mutual recognition agreements also support the movement of professionals within the region. For example, ASEAN has developed mutual recognition agreements for engineering, nursing, architecture, accounting, dentistry, and medical sciences (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c).

The international level.

At the international level, values of quality take shape through cultural norms and societal expectations of higher education. The fundamental characteristic of regional and international QA initiatives is trust. Since trust is deeply embedded in cultural values and norms, “…we don’t see it anymore and it becomes the way of doing things….Therefore, what others do differently becomes doubtful…they are not completely to be trusted (LeMaitre, 2005, p. 3).” The issue of quality is then embedded in the notion of trusting other forms of QA, other types of higher education institutions, and other practices of higher education management.

Protecting developing countries from brain drain and shielding students from poor higher education are some of the reasons why international QA practices are beginning to emerge. INQAAHE (2007) has developed a Guide of Good Practices in Quality Assurance (GGP) that clarifies the importance of external and internal QA. In 2004, the International Association of University Presidents in a consortium with UNESCO and INQAAHE, initiated a World Quality Register (WQR) that serves as a public database of
QA agencies. The WQR recommends the same methodology as ISO 9000, which will be discussed later in the chapter. Harvey (2004) voices concern that these types of emerging QA international bodies may suggest a possibility of QA imperialism, putting QA monitoring in the hands of a few national hegemons.

Although external QA agencies are intended for national institutions, there are a growing number of national QA agencies that accredit or audit higher education institutions within other countries or territories. This internationalization of QA involves 1) mutual recognition, 2) international agencies, and/or 3) supranational agencies (Harvey, 2004). Mutual recognition is a form of international validation, where national agencies can approve each other’s procedures and practices. With the growth of cross-border higher education, international or regional agencies would do essentially what national agencies do. Institutions would work directly through a regional or international agency, rather than a national agency. For countries without formal accrediting agencies, or the resources to develop and maintain such agencies, this could be useful. Supranational agencies would perform evaluation of other agencies, not of institutions or programs. Harvey (2004) contends that these three broad approaches are flawed because they are culturally-blind and assume one dominant methodology for QA, which is a risk for international and regional QA bodies.

**International standardized systems of measurement.**

There are two business models of quality management often recommended for QA of higher education institutions: Total Quality Management and ISO 9000. Total Quality Management (TQM) is an internationally recognized method for assuring quality in business production. Attributed to the ideas of W. E. Deming, a theorist in quality production, TQM offers 14 points to ensure quality products and a healthy organization (Marshall, Pritchard, & Gunderson, 2004). Some policymakers recommend that central accountability practices of TQM be implemented within higher education. Supporters of TQM assert that its proactive approach to developing a system based on the client’s needs is applicable to managing quality in education (Arif, et al., 2005). Arif, Smiley, and Kulonda (2005) contend that its approach to quality inspection and control are similar to the accreditation process. In developing a mass higher education system, TQM can help address accessibility issues with the ideas of customizing the product for the consumer.
(Arif, et al., 2005), similar to “value for money” or “transformative” definitions of quality. TQM’s system approach is also compatible with a “fitness for purpose” definition of quality.

Implementation of TQM has not been without its challenges. There are concerns that the implementation of TQM may see the purpose of higher education as being that of job-placement for the consumer/student. This outlook could damage the nature of higher education in its support of faculty who conduct research (Arif, et al., 2005). If a strictly employer-based approach is taken to measure quality of higher education institutions, TQM practices also could have a harmful effect on already marginalized subjects or schools of thought.

There are many similarities between higher education QA rhetoric and that of ISO 9000, an accreditation process for accrediting agencies (Harvey, 2004; Woodhouse, 2003). ISO 9000 requires a certain methodology for assessing quality, which includes self-review, peer visits and documentation (Harvey, 2004; Woodhouse, 2004). Advocates of using ISO 9000 in higher education contend that it is a strong way to manage quality on a systemic level (Woodhouse, 2004).

Opponents complain that the ISO series does not take into account institutional autonomy or academic freedom and “…evokes a political, document-based, control mechanism (Harvey, 2004, p. 69).” For ISO 9000, quality takes shape in a quantitative form, measured by technical and bureaucratic processes. For disciplines that are not quantifiable, quality evaluations could either be low or the recommendations to improve quality will not be applicable to the specific subject.

QA Policies in Asia and the Pacific

Many QA policies in Asia and the Pacific are similar to QA policies in the rest of the world. A main difference in QA policies of Asia and the Pacific compared to other regions of the world, like Africa, Europe, Latin America, or the Middle East is the history of how QA was developed. The history of QA in Asia and the Pacific can shed light on how QA policies came to be, and can explain some of the differences in QA policies and practices such as the role of the external QA agency.
The history of QA in Asia and the Pacific.

There are two main periods of QA development in Asia and the Pacific. The first period of QA development spans most of the twentieth century, with the main activity happening during the middle of the century after the Second World War. QA as a specific type of quality assessment process in higher education, developed alongside the quality movement in industry, which also began after the end the Second World War (Mishra, 2007; Sallis, 2002). The second period of QA development started around the turn of the twenty-first century, when several low-income countries began modest investments into their higher education systems. With support of bi-lateral and international development agencies, low-income countries began to develop QA policies and receive training on how to conduct external and internal quality assessment reviews.

History of the quality movement in Asia.

The initial leaders of the quality movement in industry came from Japan and the US. The quality movement in industry started with the increase in mass production. A need for quality control developed to assure the quality of products coming from an assembly line chain. In the early twentieth century, quality was controlled by the foreman, and then it was based on systematic inspection (Sallis, 2002). By the Second World War, a statistical process was use to monitor quality, which is how Deming was introduced to quality control. As previously mentioned, Deming’s TQM is based on 14 principles. This theory of management also developed through the ideas of Japanese and American scholars. Deming’s TQM theories were introduced to industry in the early 1960s, and became main stream by the 1980s. TQM’s contribution to quality management is its emphasis on continuous improvement in the quality cycle, which is the main attraction for using TQM in systems of higher education.

QA development in Asia and the Pacific during the twentieth century.

The countries/territories in Asia and the Pacific that have the most established QA policies and traditions today are those whose higher education systems adopted QA

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1 For an excellent summary of these thinkers, see Mishra, 2007.
practices during the twentieth century. The adoption of QA policies and practices has
colonial or neo-colonial roots. The UK, US and Russia played a role in the development
of QA policies and practices in the first wave of adopters after the Second World War.
The UK had the largest impact on this process. Countries that are historically
Commonwealth countries—Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, India, Bangladesh, Sri
Lanka, and Pakistan—all modeled their QA policies after the British system. Many of
the Commonwealth countries started their QA systems with a University Grants
Commission, as can been seen today in India, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and
Pakistan.

A few countries, like Japan and the Philippines, had support from American
development projects after the Second World War (Japan University Accreditation
Association, 2010; Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, 2010). Intended to
follow the American model of non-governmental accreditation bodies, the trajectory of
the two countries have followed different paths. The Philippines’ system, which is highly
diversified, has several accrediting bodies similar to the US. The Japanese system has not
relied as heavily on such non-governmental accreditation bodies, like Japan University
Accreditation Association, because of how funding for private and public universities is
controlled by the government. The influence of the British and American policies can be
seen today within these countries with audit (British) systems or accreditation (American)
systems.

**QA development in Asia and the Pacific in the twenty-first century.**

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, and the very end of the twentieth
century, many low-income and low middle-income countries in Asia and the Pacific
began to develop QA policies and practices. Some had the support of multi-lateral and bi-
lateral development agencies as part of higher education projects, such as the World Bank
projects discussed in Chapter Five. Since 2000, nearly a dozen countries in Asia and the
Pacific have established QA practices\(^2\)

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\(^2\) Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Mongolia, Timor-Leste, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Fiji, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan
The push to develop QA policies and practices is linked to the privatization and massification of higher education. Privatization was used as a means to increase higher education enrollment in developing countries. In countries like Malaysia and Viet Nam, QA practices were originally developed to monitor private institutions; public institutions were initially exempt from QA mechanisms.

Cross-border higher education is another way to boost higher education enrollment as well as to offer higher quality of provision. For instance, Australia’s third largest export is higher education, offering quality provision in nearby developing countries (Harman, 2004). Newly developed QA systems often do not have policies on cross-border higher education and often rely on foreign QA systems to monitor the quality through the home (not the host) country. There are several negative implications to this assumption, which is why the APQN, UNESCO, and the OECD have produced guidelines and toolkits related to cross-border higher education (OECD & UNESCO, 2005; UNESCO & APQN, 2007).

**International Norms of Quality Assurance**

The established international QA norms center on the practices of internal and external review, as Chapter Five will illustrate further. The measurement of quality within these internal and external reviews can vary depending on the level being measured (e.g. individual, classroom, programmatic, institutional, etc.), and the focus of the measurement (e.g. input, process, output, outcome). The QA norms that are being embedded in global, regional, and national higher education initiatives may also introduce elements of QA imperialism, particularly when certain cultural or even disciplinary ideals are given higher priority over others (Harvey, 2004; Skolnik, 2010). The norms related to external QA review may be challenged by some countries in Asia and the Pacific because of the epistemological values associated with the role of the state and the academy in society.

**External quality assurance agencies.**

The key to QA practices, as they have been established in western society, is the external quality agency. An external quality agency can either be a NGO or a
governmental organization. Most accreditation models expect that the external quality agency is a NGO so that there is some level of separation between the funding body (the government) and the agency evaluating quality. This separation is necessary to eliminate conflict of interest and to protect institutional autonomy.

The relationship between the academy and the state and the assertion of institutional autonomy and academic freedom differs in various cultural contexts. In higher education systems, such as those in small Pacific islands, an external quality agency may or may not be part of the government, but the possibility of there being a conflict of interest between those who serve as reviewers is great because of the small size of the system. Most of the QA professionals or examiners know each other, which is also a challenge in elite systems of higher education. The necessity of an external body measuring quality is not as obvious in different cultural contexts because of the expectations of the relationship between the state and the academy and eventually may be challenged as an international QA norm.

Conclusion

Originally QA initiatives were established to assist institutions and individuals to understand the standards practiced in other parts of the same country (Woodhouse, 2004). The structure of non-governmental bodies to monitor the quality of higher education institutions, rather than governmental bodies, ensured greater institutional autonomy.

As elite systems moved to mass systems, national funding increased to support this move. In the effort to account for the enlarged government expenditure, the practice of QA developed (Woodhouse, 2004). The growth of cross-border higher education programs was another reason for an expansion of QA systems, particularly in developing countries. Developing countries, whose elite systems are transitioning to mass systems, need QA practices to monitor the expansion of private higher education, either as cross-border provision or as domestic private provision.

Another rationale for QA mechanisms is to monitor and support the worldwide competitiveness of national universities. Increase in worldwide competition between universities is a challenge to countries with little resources to initiate QA mechanisms (Singh, 2004). QA mechanisms such as audit and accreditation allow for flexibility in
how higher education institutions meet global competition demands. The practices of audit and accreditation, particularly in the role the external QA agency plays and its position between the state, market and academy, can play an influential role in developing systems of QA. As Skolnik (2010) contends, the different viewpoints of quality favor different stakeholders, which puts QA policymakers in a position of power within the national system. Instead of ignoring the political dimensions to QA, Skolnik (2010) recommends that a responsive model for assessment be used that includes the collaborative efforts of all higher education stakeholders. The exploration of the APQN as a regional higher education actor can unpack how regional QA actors favor different stakeholders in the QA capacity building process and how far they go in reconciling conflicts between stakeholder values and ideologies.

Audit and accreditation practices will look differently depending on the ideologies of the dominant QA stakeholder. For neo-liberal stakeholders, flexibility, innovation and alignment of these practices to the market will be paramount. For liberal international stakeholders, alignment to other countries will be the focus, which favors a combination of the state and the market, and only academe in cases where national universities are global competitors. For institutional reformer stakeholders, equal attention is given to the state, market and academe. For global transformer and radical stakeholders, QA practices would resist market policies that marginalize some stakeholders, expecting the academy and the state to create alternative forms of QA with redistributive elements. For state/nationalist stakeholders, the state is the main focus and driver of QA policies.

Besides defining key terms related to quality and quality assurance, this chapter has organized the QA literature into the many levels of higher education policymaking and practice. The many levels of QA include: individual, departmental, professional, institutional, national, regional, and international. The individual level includes aspects of student learning, faculty member’s pedagogy, and the quality of work for higher education staff. The departmental and disciplinary levels include studying curriculum design, meeting professional and institutional expectations, and monitoring research productivity. The professional level, which sometimes falls within the departmental level, includes benchmarking against other similar programs, meeting the expected learning outcomes of the field, and supporting the industry served by the profession. The
institutional level includes accountability reports to public and private funders, measurements for self-improvement and self-assessment, and participating in national and international rankings. The national level includes managing QA policies such as laws, infrastructure, and funding that support QA practices. The regional level has been overlooked until recently, and involves regional initiatives generated by higher education institutions, national ministries, and regional multi-lateral bodies like the European Union, ASEAN, and international bodies, like UNESCO. The international level includes multi-lateral organizations like the World Bank, OECD, and UNESCO, and NGOs like international professional associations that can be either networks of QA professionals, like INQAAHE, or accreditation bodies, like ABET. The breadth of QA is too great to cover in this thesis. In order to answer the thesis question, only three levels will be examined in greater detail: the international, regional, and national levels.

As the previous chapter illustrated, values and ideologies are often embedded in QA policies and practices. Without identifying these values and ideologies, and the viewpoints of QA and the stakeholders it favors, QA policies and practices could undermine academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and possibly national sovereignty. QA capacity building efforts may overlook or over-emphasize certain levels of the higher education system. In the following chapters, the international, regional, and national QA actors and their QA capacity building activities in Asia and the Pacific will be identified to understand the values underpinning these activities. This chapter provides the foundation for understanding the QA terms examined in the rest of the thesis.
Chapter Four: Mixed Methods Research Design

In order to understand higher education regionalization, this study explores the case of the APQN by examining the norms, values and identities of national, regional and international actors contributing to and benefitting from its QA capacity building efforts. The key theoretical concepts of this study identify three ideal-types of higher education regionalization 1) as a sub-set of globalization, 2) as a regional form of internationalization, or 3) as an alternative to globalization. In order to identify the ideal-type of higher education regionalization that the APQN exemplifies, a mixed methods research design is implemented in an embedded case study.

This chapter will first lay out reasons for why the APQN is a good case study for the study of higher education regionalization. I will then provide rationales for why I’m using a revelatory embedded case study and explain the levels of the research design. After the levels of the research design have been articulated, I will discuss the rationales for using a sequential mixed methods approach using methodological triangulation. Using Creswell et al’s (2003) decision matrix as a guide for articulating the mixed methods approach, the last part of the chapter is divided into the four sections: 1) implementation, 2) priority, 3) integration, and 4) theoretical perspectives. In the conclusion, I will discuss the limitations of the study, present a list of my assumptions, describe how I ensured the trustworthiness of the data, and explain the ethical considerations I made.

The APQN as a Case Study

The APQN is a good case study for exploring higher education regionalization for three main reasons. First, representing the most populated region in the world with an incredible diversity of economies and political systems, the APQN can highlight how higher education regionalization works within a highly diverse region. Second, its inception was through the collaboration of national and international actors. It was the first regional QA network established through a three-year Development Grant Facility (DGF) fund of the World Bank. International actors involved in overseeing the funding of regional QA networks consider the APQN a leader among the regional QA networks,
giving the APQN legitimacy at the international and inter-regional level. Third, there are other regional organizations in Asia and the Pacific that also focus on national QA capacity building. Comparing the APQN to these other regional bodies might yield new understandings of higher education regionalization.

**Rationale for Using a Revelatory Embedded Case Study**

A case study is a useful method for investigating a new phenomenon, such as higher education regionalization. According to Yin (2009), a “case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (p. 13).” The boundaries between the phenomenon of higher education regionalization as exemplified by the APQN and the context of the multiple levels (national, regional and international) of actors involved in QA capacity building within Asia and the Pacific are not clearly evident. The overlapping of national, regional, and international organizations working collaboratively and separately on QA policies and practices blurs the lines between the context and case of the APQN and how it exemplifies higher education regionalization.

Case studies typically sit within the qualitative method of inquiry. Usually bounded by time and activity, the data collection for a case study can come from a variety of procedures (Creswell, 2003; Stake, 1995). This case study is predominately a qualitative study with quantitative methods used to embellish it, which classifies the study as using mixed methods (Creswell, et al., 2003). An investigation of the multi-dimensional nature of higher education regionalization can benefit from multiple methods of inquiry in order to gain a fuller picture of higher education regionalization and the APQN.

The research question, “What can be learned about higher education regionalization through a study of the APQN?” used multi-leveled subsidiary questions related to international, regional, and national QA capacity building. This multi-leveled dimension calls for a research design that takes into account international, regional, and national actors and their QA capacity building activities.
A revelatory case study examines a phenomenon that hasn’t been studied to understand the mechanisms and structures generating it (Yin, 2003). Although regionalism has been taken up in a few studies on higher education (Jayasuriya, 2010; Jayasuriya & Robertson, 2010), the regionalization of higher education has only been studied in a few cases (Beerkens, 2004; Dale & Robertson, 2002; Knight, 2011; Kuroda, 2009). Higher education regionalization as studied through the development of regional QA networks, such as the APQN, has so far not been done, as far as I have been able to discover. Examining the values and norm-setting instruments of the APQN and its partners and beneficiaries can illustrate to what extent the APQN follows one of the three ideal-types of higher education regionalization described in Chapter Two. Thus, by examining the case and context for the APQN, this study will provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of higher education regionalization.

The sharing of common members by various regional and international organizations within the context of higher education in Asia and the Pacific may suggest that the phenomenon of higher education regionalization isn’t a phenomenon at all, but simply a result of globalization, a result of the internationalization of higher education, or both. The purpose of articulating the context of the study, described in Chapter Five, is to identify how the global QA capacity building actors promote QA policies and to understand how the APQN disseminates, rejects, or alters these policies.

The specificities of the case, in Chapters Six and Seven, examine the APQN as a new regional actor in higher education policymaking, purposely studying APQN’s relationships with its national members. The embedded case study of Việt Nam in Chapter Eight provides one national perspective of the APQN and its role in one nation’s QA capacity building. As an embedded case study within a single-unit case study, the Việt Nam case provides a “slice of the pie” perspective. This national case investigates Việt Nam’s QA policies and activities and the contributions national, regional, and global actors have made to its QA capacity building.

As Chapter Two illustrated, higher education regionalization is a socially constructed project, which can be observed by looking at the norms, values and identity of the actors engaged in it. Identifying the norms, values, and identities of the actors involved in the APQN, provides empirical evidence for how higher education
Regionalization is socially constructed through one regional higher education project. Figure 4.1 illustrates the levels within the study’s design to show how context and case overlap and, therefore, blurred in the thesis.

**Figure 4.1. National, regional, and international levels of the study design**

Both the APQN case and the embedded case of Việt Nam reflect on the national, regional and international actors involved in the QA capacity building process. Whereas the APQN case provides a specific regional perspective on norms, values and the identity of the national and international actors involved in regional QA capacity building, the embedded case provides a specific national perspective on utilizing regional and international actors in QA capacity building.

**Rationale for Using a Methodological Triangulation Design**

In methodological triangulation, the mixed approaches are blended after analysis, in order to utilize the strengths of each tradition (Speziale, Streubert, & Carpenter, 2011). Therefore the qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed separately to identify the values, norms, and regional identity asserted by the different international, regional and national actors involved in the APQN’s QA capacity building. The qualitative data captured the particularities of the international, regional, and national actors and QA activities, whereas the quantitative data were intended to capture a general perspective of
higher education experts interested in QA in Asia and the Pacific. Figure 4.2 illustrates the model for using this mixed methods design (Creswell, 2003; Steckler, McLeroy, Goodman, & Bird, 1992) as cited in (Creswell, et al., 2003)

Figure 4.2. Mixed method design

The analysis of the qualitative findings is complemented with quantitative data, as Figure 4.2 shows, to provide a fuller picture of how the APQN exemplifies the ideal-types of higher education regionalization. Originally I started the study by primarily combining two qualitative traditions—textual analysis and ethnography—to utilize three methods for collecting data: 1) policy discourse analysis, 2) participant observation, and 3) key informant interviews. My plan was to use methodological triangulation, also known as methods triangulation, which combines more than one method to investigate a phenomenon (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007).

In methods triangulation, if the data does not give a full enough picture of the phenomenon under study, an additional method may be added (Speziale, et al., 2011). Methodological triangulation, therefore, is used as a way to provide a more comprehensive approach to the research question, rather than to validate the findings of the various methods used (Morse, 1991).

After the first round of key informant interviews and participant observation, it was clear that adding an online survey would be important to the study because it could offer a general perspective of the APQN’s QA capacity building activities by hundreds of higher education experts interested in QA in Asia and the Pacific. Adding an online survey would allow me to collect more opinions about the APQN that I could not accomplish by solely conducting key informant interviews. Therefore, adding the online survey made this a mixed methods study, combining methods from both qualitative and quantitative traditions. Taking a sequential approach to a methods triangulation design, I
started with qualitative data collection, and followed with quantitative data collection. Using Creswell et al.’s (2003) decision matrix for mixed methods design, the next section will spell out the implementation, priority, integration and theoretical perspective for this mixed methods study.

**Sequential Implementation of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods**

A mixed methods approach is a pragmatic way to focus on the main research question, and let the question drive the methodology. Pragmatism as a branch of philosophy is concerned with the iterative relationship between theory and practice; how theory informs practice and how practice informs theory. The underlying rationale behind choosing a “pragmatic position” in mixed methods research is to enhance the quality of the research to make it more accurate and useful (Rocco et al., 2003, p. 596). The main focus of this study is on the concepts of higher education regionalization and how the APQN reflects these concepts through its QA capacity building in Asia and the Pacific. Pragmatism recognizes that there are pluralistic views of the world (Maxcy, 2003), which opens the door for me to use various traditions of research methods to explore the APQN’s ideal-type of higher education regionalization. The mixing of methodologies provides this study with a more holistic perspective on higher education regionalization as exemplified by the APQN. The mixed methods approach is implemented in a revelatory embedded case study in order to capture the international, regional, and national actors involved in QA capacity building in Asia and the Pacific.

The rationale for using a sequential triangulation strategy is to gain both an in-depth picture of the individual contributors and benefactors of the APQN’s QA capacity building activities, through the key informant interviews, participant observation, and textual analysis, and a general, more comprehensive picture of the individuals and organizations who are interested in and benefit from the APQN’s QA capacity building activities through the online survey.

**Implementation of Data Collection and Analysis**

There were three traditions from which data was collected in this study. The first was textual analysis, the second employed ethnographic analytic techniques and the third
used survey analysis. As this study draws mainly from the qualitative tradition, the data collection and analysis process is mainly iterative, involving re-examining the data as it compared to other forms of the data collected.

The first method, which I conducted concurrently with the other qualitative methods, analyzed documents to understand the underlying values and ideologies of QA capacity building in the region and how the APQN is forming its identity as a regional higher education actor. Table 4.1 provides an overview of the data collected.

The second method employed ethnography—using participant observation and key informant interviews—for understanding the values, rationales, policies, and practices of QA capacity building by the APQN. Ethnography investigates the contextual factors that make up “everyday life” (Creswell, 1998, pp. 34, 35; Smith, 2005; Wolcott, 1998). Ethnography describes and interprets a culture, social group, or system (Creswell, 1998), such as the APQN. Using analytic techniques from ethnography enables me to interpret the experiences and ideas shared by the key informants, and to describe the social interaction—professional and personal—in the APQN meetings as a participant observer. This ethnographic method of inquiry is appropriate to my study because it allows me to explore the various levels of actors within the APQN’s activities to identify how these actors influence the norms, values, and identity of the APQN.

The third method collected data about the usage of APQN activities through an online survey of the APQN’s mailing list subscribers. The survey asked questions about the frequency with which mailing list subscribers attended APQN activities, events, and viewed its website. The survey also asked opinion questions about the possible benefits gained from participating in APQN events. The following section details the implementation of three traditions of data collection: 1) textual discourse analysis, 2) ethnographic participant observation and key informant interviews, and 3) survey analysis.
The same types of data collection processes were used for the embedded case as those used in the main case of the APQN including both qualitative and quantitative methods. For the context of the study, focusing on international QA actors, only qualitative data are analyzed because not enough individuals from international and regional organizations completed the online survey to yield solid results. Each of the findings chapters consider the qualitative and quantitative data, and map out the role of the international and national actors, and the role that the APQN plays in QA capacity building in order to suggest the ideal-type of higher education regionalization with which it fits most closely.

**Textual discourse analysis.**

Textual discourse analysis is the overarching category for the analysis of texts as social productions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The purpose of policy discourse analysis for this study is to understand the underlying values and norms of QA and how these ideas are framed in policy texts. White (1994) identifies three perspectives of policy...
analysis as discourse: 1) analytic discourse, 2) critical discourse, and 3) persuasive discourse. The perspective I take is persuasive discourse analysis. Persuasive discourse analysis examines how preferences and views emerge and how policymakers influence these preferences (White, 1994). By investigating how preferences and values of QA emerge through the persuasive discourse used in policy texts, I can identify how policymakers are influencing QA development. Persuasive discourse analysis can pinpoint who the targeted audience is and examine the values and preferences persuasively used in the discourse of QA policies and practices. For the purpose of understanding context, examined in Chapter Five, the documents selected for policy discourse analysis were collected from a variety of sources, specifically from the World Bank, UNESCO, INQAAHE, and the Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC).

Within the case study, examined in Chapters Six and Seven, I collected annual reports, conference proceedings, workshop materials, project documents, and planning and implementation documents from the APQN. I was specifically interested in 1) policy documents that reference “good” practices, and encourage certain types of QA, 2) annual reports which include sponsors, key members, and project outcomes, and 3) organizational structures such as membership criteria and the constitution’s rules for nominating and voting for Board members.

Since the development of the APQN is still new, organizational and legal documentation was limited; however, the website, annual conferences, training sessions, and projects conducted over the past few years provided enough documentation for analysis. The following questions guided my analysis:

- What associations or higher education bodies are being referenced the most?
- What are the common themes in the discussion of QA capacity building in developing countries?
- Who is sponsoring the APQN activities both financially and with personnel?

For the embedded case study of Việt Nam, planning and implementation documents were collected from the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), QA
agencies, and universities or research centers. Documents were also gathered through
snowballing, asking key informants to refer or to provide documents that had been
particularly useful in their QA capacity building efforts.

To interpret the documents, I used a variety of strategies. Nvivo, a qualitative
software program, was used to code some of the APQN documents to gain a deeper
understanding about how particular arguments were made within the texts. For most of
the other documents, I used the search function in MS Word and Adobe PDF reader to
identify all the areas where QA was mentioned. My aim was to understand how QA was
defined, the rationales for using QA, and what was cited as examples. If I was able to get
historical data, I also examined if any changes occurred in how the texts discussed QA
over time.

My coding process used the computer as well as hand-coding. For analyzing the
documents within Nvivo, I initially coded the documents for distinct themes. The
documents I chose to analyze in Nvivo were the online course materials sponsored
UNESCO-IIIEP and APQN. The initial coding had 63 separate codes. Codes were
determined by their distinction from other ideas in the texts. Next, I reviewed the codes to
see if they could be aggregated into themes. The codes were written on note cards and
visually spread out on a table so that I could view them in their entirety in order to find
overlapping codes. After that, I compared the codes to each other to determine
commonalities and differences. From this comparison process, I came up with 12 distinct
themes that I could then describe and interpret. From the process of describing and
interpreting the 12 themes, I aggregated the themes into six main themes (see Appendix
A for a list of the codes and themes).

For documents that I hand-coded, I searched for where QA was mentioned, in
what context, and how it was defined. With hand-coding, I analyzed the texts differently,
looking not so much for themes to code, but to determine the role of persuasive discourse
in the texts. Specifically, I looked for how values and norms of QA emerged and how
international, regional, or national bodies influenced these values and viewpoints. Many
of the documents were related to larger higher education projects or policies, and only
mentioned QA a handful of times; therefore, I could cut and paste these references into a
larger chart in order to see how these comments related to other documents published by
the same organization. An example of this type of chart is in Chapter Five on the World Bank higher education projects in Asia and the Pacific between 2000 and 2011. The policy discourse analysis is meant to provide the starting point for the analysis of the data, although often texts were discovered after I conducted the participant observation of the Annual Conferences and key informant interviews.

**Ethnographic participant observation and key informant interviews.**

Within the main epistemological traditions of qualitative research, ethnography provides techniques for gathering data about how individuals and social groups describe and make meaning out of their experiences. The ethnographic data collection method of this research allowed me to understand how the main actors in the APQN interpret the need for QA in developing systems of higher education, the rationales for why regional QA networks are important, and to hear through the key informants’ personal experiences how the national, regional, and international levels intersect.

Although I use social constructivism as an international relations theory to build my conceptual framework, I have chosen ethnography over constructivist methodologies because my research question is not focused on the relationship I can develop with the research participants as constructivist research necessitates (Charmaz, 2000, p. 525). Stated differently, due to the nature of my research question, which looks at the phenomenon of higher education regionalization, the data collection was not dependent on deep meaning-generating relationships with my research participants as constructivist methods require.

While ethnography has traditionally focused on local particularities, recent trends in the social sciences to situate local context with international, regional, and national contexts have opened up new forms of ethnography, such as applied ethnography (Chambers, 2000). Applied ethnography examines decision making processes and the significance of cultural understanding often within the context of local and global issues (Chambers, 2000). This study shares many similarities with applied ethnography, particularly the focus on micro and macro perspectives, as well as the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches.
One of the dominant critiques of ethnography is the objectifying approach it may take when the participant observer stands on the sidelines and does not thoroughly engage with the participants. Over the last few decades, there has been a shift in how ethnography is conducted, particularly challenging the researcher to take an intersubjective approach (Tedlock, 2000). An intersubjective approach considers the common ideas and values that people share. It is this intersubjective approach that I have taken to engage with research participants as colleagues.

**Participant observation.**

Participant observation was conducted through my involvement at APQN activities: the 2009 and 2010 annual general meetings and annual conferences, and one pre-conference workshop. Chisholm (2007) asserts in her research on outcomes-based learning and national qualifications frameworks in South Africa, that regional conferences are important spaces for the spread of new educational ideas through “policy entrepreneurs” that can then be exported for national use. Because conferences and workshops gather momentum around educational policy ideas, such as QA, participant observation at these meetings can illuminate how policy discourse at the regional level may be diffused to the national level.

Before each annual conference and general meeting, I gained permission from the APQN Board of Directors to act as a participant observer in the conference and in the members-only annual general meeting. Participant observation allowed me to understand the social organization of the network and to identify themes in discussions and debates regarding QA. On the scale between “complete participant” to “complete observer” (Bryman, 2001; Merriam, 1998), I situated myself somewhere in the middle, acting more in the role of participant-as-observer than of an observer-as-participant, particularly when active participation was requested such as during question and answer sessions, or in brainstorming session on the strategic planning for the APQN. In other words, I did not share my opinions about QA capacity building, nor offer advice on what the APQN should be doing, but I interacted with the conference participants as a higher education expert interested in QA.

Having gained access from the Board, I was an overt participant observer (Bryman, 2001) who was able to take full field notes inconspicuously during the
conference presentations, detailing the conference setting, describing the mood of the participants during some of the presentations, reporting how the presenters were introduced and who introduced them, and recording what kinds of questions were asked after the presentations and who asked them. I was also able to interact with conference participants during breaks and at meal times and took field notes (during the conference or once back at my room) about their general perception of the conference and their experiences with QA capacity building in their home country or home institution.

Within these meetings I looked for common questions being asked and who was asking them. I paid particular attention to any references to borrowed or shared practices and policies within the presentations and answers to the questions. Noting the types and involvement levels of participants was useful for identifying key informants. This data will be shared in Chapter Seven.

Since these meetings are generally closed to the public, it could have been difficult for me to gain access to the APQN meetings. The APQN Board was extremely open to my request to participate in the conference and annual general meeting. As gatekeepers, the individual Board members were very willing to help me in any way they could, assisting with the pre-test of the survey, providing me access to the members-only website, and becoming key informants.

Although my experience with the APQN “gatekeepers” was quite easy, I was unsuccessful in requesting access to a GIQAC Steering Committee meeting in 2009. In an interview, one of the key informants (a Steering Committee member) suggested I observe the meeting as an opportunity to learn more about the GIQAC and its role in regional QA networks. My request was turned down by the Chair of the Steering Committee because sensitive information about the networks, such as personnel or funding details, would be shared in these meetings. The Chair (rightfully) had some ethical concerns about my participation.

I suspect that the concern may have been connected to a previous observer by INQAAHE. The GIQAC founding documents state that INQAAHE can be an observer (GIQAC, 2008). Prior to the meeting that I requested to observe, an INQAAHE representative had been an observer at most of the GIQAC Steering Committee meetings. During times when the Steering Committee had to make decisions regarding funding or
during discussions regarding progress of certain programs in the regional networks, the INQAAHE observer would be dismissed. Because INQAAHE became a recipient of GIQAC funding, this type of participation was a conflict of interest, which is why INQAAHE no longer had representation at the meetings. The timing of my request, I believe, may have coincided with these other necessary changes in meeting protocol.

*Key informant interviews.*

The purpose of the key informant interviews was to collect opinion data on the QA capacity building activities of the APQN; the needs of the national-level actors, particularly from developing countries; and the perception of those needs by international agencies. The key informant interviews also assisted me in gathering leads for important documents for policy discourse analysis. Key informant interviews helped me to learn about APQN activities not mentioned in the documents or in the conferences/workshops, and served to triangulate the core actors in the network who I identified in the textual analysis and participant observation data collection processes.

For the key informant interviews, my selection of the research sample was purposeful (Patton, 2002), using a strategy of maximum variation in key informants who represented a diverse group of people intimately familiar with the APQN and its QA capacity building activities. Maximum variation strategy looks at a diverse group of participants in order to find common patterns of impact, experiences, or shared policies (Patton, 2002). Sites used for key informant interviews included Hanoi & Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Paris, France; and Bangkok, Thailand. These sites were selected based on the concentration of key informants found in these locations during important APQN and GIQAC meetings.

Participants had to meet one of three criteria: 1) membership in the APQN, 2) belong to an international or regional development agency or regional organization that sponsor QA activities in developing countries, and/or 3) work in national government ministries or universities. Examples of key informants include APQN Board members, representatives from national members, representatives from global organizations affiliated with the APQN, such as INQAAHE, the World Bank, UNESCO, or the GIQAC Steering Committee. A total of 29 key informant interviews were conducted of 33 key informants. Most of the interviews were conducted in person, with one over the phone.
I interviewed fifteen key informants directly involved in the APQN; nine key informants familiar with the Vietnamese QA capacity building experiences; and nine key informants involved in the GIQAC. Table 4.2 describes key characteristics of the key informants.

**Table 4.2 Characteristics of Key Informants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Actor</th>
<th>Non-governmental (e.g. higher education institutions, external QA agencies, NGOs)</th>
<th>Governmental (e.g. Ministry officials)</th>
<th>Multi-lateral (e.g. International organizations, regional trading bodies)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>6 men</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>3 men 2 women</td>
<td>9 men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>1 man 1 woman</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1 man 1 woman</td>
<td>2 men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>6 men (1 Vietnamese) 9 women (3 Vietnamese)</td>
<td>3 men (all Vietnamese)</td>
<td>10 men 9 women</td>
<td>20 men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13 men 10 women</td>
<td>3 men 4 men 3 women</td>
<td></td>
<td>20 men</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I used a combination of convenience and snowball sampling methods for the interviews. Convenience sampling is when key informants are selected and recruited for interviews based on their proximity and availability (Bryman, 2001). Due to the nature of the APQN’s wide network, the best way to interview a diverse group of key informants was at meetings or events, thus convenience sampling was the best form of conducting interviews of APQN and GIQAC key informants. I also used some snowball sampling, which is when key informants are asked to refer other possible key informants (Bryman, 2001). I chose snowball sampling in a few cases with APQN key informants, when several APQN members made reference to other potential key informants, and therefore, I would contact them to request an interview. I used snowball sampling mostly with the Vietnamese key informants because it was difficult to find participants who would agree to be interviewed.

According to the ethical protocol approved by the University of Toronto, I first contacted each key informant by email to give them the opportunity to consider my
request away from my possible influence. The email message had a list of potential interview questions with the consent form and explained my need for their signature if they agreed to participate in the study (see Appendices B and C). If I met a potential participant at the conference, I let the potential participant know that I would be sending them an email with information about my study in case they were interested in participating. Often a few email exchanges took place before we established a time to meet.

If the participant responded positively to the request, I arranged an interview at which time I asked the participant to sign the consent form. In some cases, consent forms were signed electronically and sent to me prior to the meeting. Most of the interviews were audio-taped. For five of the interviews, due to technical difficulties, or at the request of the key informants, I took notes rather than audio tape some interviews. The key informant interviews were open-ended and semi-structured (see Appendix C for my interview guide). Interviews lasted between 20 minutes and 150 minutes in length. Most interviews were between 30 – 50 minutes. The variation in the interview time was connected to the key informants’ interest and availability in discussing the topic of QA capacity building and higher education regionalization. The Vietnamese participants spent more time talking to me than the other participants. In-person interviews took place at the key informants place of work or in a public setting. Interviews in public settings typically were shorter than those at the key informants’ place of work.

Although there was an interview guide, the interviews were open-ended and semi-structured to allow me to probe for clarity of certain topics or further elaboration on context specific ideas shared that were unclear to me. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed for discussion of topics beyond the interview guide, which often provided a deeper perspective of quality, QA, capacity building, higher education policy and practice, international development, and regionalization. This semi-structured nature also provided the depth necessary in the ethnographic tradition (Fontana & Frey, 2000).

All of the key informants work for national or international agencies with mandates in higher education. These agencies may be non-governmental, governmental, or multi-lateral. As civil servants or public officials, participants on average did not share
confidential information with me; however, each was given the opportunity to speak confidentially (see ethical considerations at the end of the chapter).

For the embedded case study of Việt Nam, anonymity was particularly important as QA is a sensitive topic in the politics of higher education in the country. Therefore, I have chosen to represent them in the data anonymously. In Việt Nam most interviews were conducted in English, with one interview conducted in Vietnamese with an interpreter. In order to protect the key informant’s anonymity, I read through all of the quotes attributed to each key informant to ensure that they stayed anonymous. In some cases, I decided to remove an introductory note about the key informant if I felt it could jeopardize their anonymity.

Before some of the interviews, particularly those in Việt Nam, I spent time researching the informants’ backgrounds, scholarly work, and past activities within the APQN. Some of the key informants had a particular expertise that I wanted to understand further in the interview. The semi-structured nature of the interview allowed me to ask some standard questions in my interview protocol, and follow up on information shared or gained through my research.

I aimed to collect three types of data from the key informants: contextual, demographic, and perceptual (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2007). Interviews often started with some neutral questions at the beginning, for example I often started with a question about the challenges that developing countries face in QA capacity building (see interview guide in Appendix C). Although it was clear in the written communication I had with each participant prior to the interview, it was often difficult to get the national key informants to discuss the APQN’s activities specifically. There was more on their mind relating to their own national needs for QA capacity building. More of this will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

The interviews were all conducted either at the conference venue, at the key informants place of work, or in a public setting such as a hotel lobby. I encouraged the key informants to select the location. Although I tried to honor the time commitment I promised to the key informants (less than an hour), interviews often went over the time scheduled. When I indicated that the time we agreed upon had past, the key informant often replied that they were happy to continue the conversation. In one instance I ended
the interview earlier than scheduled because the key informant resisted several attempts of mine to probe for more in-depth answers and gave non-verbal signs that he had other things on his mind that he did not want to discuss.

Field notes were taken directly after the interview, often in the taxi or during a conference presentation, and typed up later. Analytic field notes were also taken while I was in the field as an interim analysis to make links between ideas shared (Brewer, 2000). Before each interview, I reviewed field notes from the past interviews to determine topics I should address in the interview that could triangulate with the other interview data or provide an alternative meaning from the other interviews (Brewer, 2000).

I transcribed all the interviews verbatim, including laughing, coughing, or interruptions. I checked the transcripts once or twice for accuracy, particularly in the case of interviews with key informants who spoke English as a second or third language. During the initial transcription, or in checking the accuracy of the transcription, I wrote memos in the transcripts noting how a comment captured the theoretical concepts in my conceptual framework, or referencing another interview that shared similar ideas, or giving context to the comment from off the record discussions. Twenty percent of the transcripts were audited by another researcher.

Coding protocol for interview analysis.

In coding and analyzing the interviews, I first divided up the interviews by key informant type: GIQAC, APQN, and Vietnamese. I started with these groups of key informants in order to represent international, regional, and national viewpoints, respectively. There are some limitations in connecting the specific type of key informant to the broader categories they intend to represent. In looking at the key informants in terms of international, regional, or national categories, most could be placed within two of these broad categories, with one category being more dominant than the other. For instance, most of the regional key informants’ primary professional responsibilities were on national capacity building, and this comes out in the interviews.

In order to follow the case study design as illustrated in Figure 4.1, the GIQAC key informant data illustrated the international context, the APQN key informant data illustrated the regional dimension of the primary case study, and the Vietnamese key
informant data was used for the embedded case study. The three interview groups were coded separately from each other in order to see if distinct themes would emerge (see Appendix D for comparison of the coding by group).

Presenting the data in this one dimensional way overlooks the multiple identities of the key informants. In order to preserve the complexity of the multiple roles many of them played, in the interview I asked questions related to these different levels of QA capacity building—international, regional, and national—and the themes which emerged, as well as many of the comments, hint at this complexity.

I started with open coding, which allows for unintended codes to emerge. Because I had an interview guide (see Appendix D) that asks specific questions related to QA capacity building and the national, regional, and international expectations and challenges to these activities, the themes that emerged within the three groups of interviews were unintentionally related to the interview guide. Different themes emerge within the distinct groups, however. For instance, the Vietnamese interviews talked a lot about the role of MOET, which became a main theme in these interviews, whereas the GIQAC and APQN key informants did not discuss the national role of Ministries of Education as much.

The coding was conducted on the computer, in MS Word, so I could cut and paste key informant comments (labeled with the coded name I assigned each key informant interview) into separate themes created as separate documents. The open coding resulted in main themes for each of the three interview categories. The main themes were identified by the frequency with which they came up in the interviews. As such, the themes related to the main eight questions I often asked in each interview. Once the main themes were identified, I examined each theme separately in a second coding phase.

In the second coding phase, I compared and contrasted the comments by the key informants within the themes, as well as identified if some of the themes were dominated by one or two key informants’ comments. In this phase, I often found that some comments overlapped with more than one theme. When there was overlap, I investigated whether a theme could be aggregated into another theme. I often reassigned some comments to different themes, once I was able to analyze the themes internally and identify further convergence among the themes. After this aggregation process, I read through the themes a third time, to determine if the themes needed to be renamed to more
accurately reflect the sentiment of the key informants (Appendix B offers a chart with the original themes, and the revised themes, by category).

Part of the aggregation process looked for breadth of the key informants. If one theme was discussed frequently, but only by two or three participants, I assigned it as a sub-theme. Once the themes were established, I organized them in each chapter by the coherence and possible overlap with other themes. At that point, I selected a quote from each theme that succinctly described the main ideas within it.

In the ethnographic tradition, this process of reading and re-reading the key informant interviews and comparing and contrasting the themes to test sources of information against one another allowed me to test the quality of the data (Fetterman, 1989). Identifying patterns of thoughts and behaviors is also part of confirming the reliability of the ethnographic data collected (Fetterman, 1989). Because the data collected in the ethnographic tradition is often rich and very complicated, this form of data management and analysis is necessary for data synthesis to identify patterns, relationships, and meanings (Brewer, 2000).

An audit of 20% of my coding was conducted by another researcher to confirm the validity of the codes. I gave the auditor 20% of the key informant interviews in each interview category (international, regional, national). He followed the same process I described above, auditing two interviews in each category. Although the codes he found were very similar to mine, he had aligned his codes more closely with the interview questions than I had. Also, his coding emphasized the importance of individual agency much more than my coding did. In our follow up discussions, he encouraged me to highlight this sense of agency in my analysis as well as the importance of the national focus of the APQN members, which alters the notion of higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization because of the importance of the state as an actor in QA capacity building.

**Online survey.**

An online survey of APQN members and non-members was conducted to assess how much the APQN’s capacity building activities are used, as well as to understand how those interested in QA in Asia and the Pacific perceive the APQN’s contribution to QA
capacity building in the region. The survey was used to assist in triangulating the data collected from the policy discourse analysis, participant observation, and key informant interviews in that it offered the perspective of a wider group of actors interested in QA in Asia and the Pacific. To reflect the research design, the survey was conducted in English and Vietnamese in order to get a deeper national perspective of the APQN through Vietnamese QA professionals (see Appendix E for the English and Vietnamese versions of the questionnaire).

The responses were analyzed to determine the contributions of APQN activities to QA capacity building. In Chapter Seven, the English version is analyzed separately from the Vietnamese survey. In Chapter Eight the Vietnamese version is analyzed and compared to the English version to determine if there are any similarities or differences between the answers provided by the Vietnamese QA professionals and the general population of QA professionals interested in QA in Asia and the Pacific.

**Survey objectives.**

The main objectives for the survey of the APQN mailing list were:

- To collect the opinions of professionals who are interested in QA policies and practices in Asia and the Pacific and their views of the APQN’s contributions to QA capacity building.
- To compare the non-member and member’s exposure to the APQN’s QA capacity building activities.
- To compare the opinions of professionals from countries with different socio-economic status.
- To identify the backgrounds of the higher education professionals interested in the APQN’s QA capacity building activities in the Asia Pacific.
- To articulate why higher education professionals are interested in the APQN’s QA capacity building activities in the Asia Pacific.

**Target population.**

In order to understand the contributions that the APQN has made to QA capacity building, an online survey was conducted in English and in Vietnamese of actors...
involved in QA policies and practices who have an interest in APQN activities. One version was conducted in English to reach the broadest population of QA actors, and the other version was conducted in Vietnamese to understand the particularities of the Vietnamese experience of QA capacity building.

The target population for the survey involves higher education professionals interested in QA in Asia and the Pacific. The population is broader than the APQN’s membership base, and broader than the Asia Pacific region, for two reasons: 1) several higher education professionals in Asia and the Pacific who are not members of the APQN, and 2) there are several higher education professionals interested in Asia and the Pacific who do not live in Asia and the Pacific.

Higher education professionals could be from ministries of education, universities, NGOs, student governing bodies, faculty associations, or industry. Several of the non-members of the APQN participate in its activities, whether through interest, funding, expertise, or need for QA capacity building assistance, and therefore should be considered in the data collection process. These types of non-members can be from the Asia Pacific region and from outside of it (mainly from Europe).

**Sampling frame.**

Developing a sample frame that covers the entire population of higher education professionals interested in the QA capacity building activities in Asia and the Pacific was challenging. Based on the limitations of reaching all higher education professionals interested in QA in Asia and the Pacific, the best sampling frame available is of those who have self-identified as having an interest in the APQN by signing up for its mailing list. Currently the membership of the APQN is made up of 80 organizations from 33 countries/territories.

The properties of the sampling frame are based on individuals representing organizations who have an interest in QA in Asia and the Pacific. These organizations and/or individuals do not necessarily have to be from Asia and the Pacific, nor do they have to be QA professionals *per se*. The best representative sample of the population of actors interested in QA in Asia and the Pacific is the APQN mailing list because it is made up of individuals who proactively signed up for the mailing list of the only regional
QA network for the entire Asia Pacific region. The mailing list had active email addresses from 288 organizations in 51 countries/territories.

**Data collection procedures.**

The mailing list is the best representation of the target population. The mailing list included 462 email addresses, 55 of which were no longer valid. I supplemented the list by comparing an APQN membership list published on its website, and contacted those on the membership list who were not on the mailing list. In total, I contacted 407 individuals; 154 responded, yielding a 38% response rate. Table 4.3 gives a summary of the response rate.

The request to participate in the online survey went out to the entire online mailing list of the APQN, where it is expected that most of the users speak English. The mailing list was obtained with the APQN Board of Director’s approval in March 2010. The mailing list is generated by a self-subscribing mechanism on the APQN website. When visitors come to the website, a pop-up window appears, encouraging them to sign up for the mailing list. The APQN Secretariat sends out email messages approximately once a month to the subscribers. At the bottom of these monthly email messages there is a link for changing or deleting the subscription. Because subscribers are given this opportunity, I assumed that those surveyed continue to have an interest in the APQN.

Of the 407 in the mailing list, 25 were from Việt Nam. Based on the information shared in the key informant interviews in Việt Nam, there may be 50 academics, ministry of education officials, and university administrators involved in QA capacity building in the country. I used multiple ways to recruit participants for the Vietnamese version. In order to supplement the mailing list, I contacted 16 additional higher education professionals involved in QA capacity building in Việt Nam. In total 37 Vietnamese professionals were contacted, and 12 responded, yielding a 32% response rate. Because of the limited number of QA actors in Việt Nam, the survey attempted to be a census of all known QA professionals in the country.

The sample for the survey translated in Vietnamese attempted to sample the census of higher education professionals involved in QA capacity building in Việt Nam. The names and contact information of these QA professionals was generated by the APQN mailing list, participation lists of APQN events, and key informants’ references. I
invited 41 Vietnamese QA professionals to participate in the survey. Four emails addresses were returned, therefore 37 were contacted. Of the 37, 12 responded, giving the Vietnamese version a 32% response rate. In total, I contacted 444 people, 166 responded, giving the survey a 37% response rate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.3 Summary of Online Survey Response Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of Valid Contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>

Survey construct.

The survey is intended to understand the role the APQN plays in QA capacity building in the region by collecting opinion data, participation data, and website usage data related to the APQN. In 2008, Bateman and Giles (2008) conducted an external review of the APQN, which was required by the World Bank for the use of the DGF. As part of this review, a survey was conducted of the members to measure the APQN’s contribution to QA capacity building in the region. Two questions in this survey are similar to two questions in Bateman and Giles (2008) survey. This survey also captures non-members’ perceptions of the APQN’s activities because the sampling frame includes anyone interested in the APQN regardless of their membership status, which has not been done before. The responses from a sub-group of APQN members who responded to the English version the survey will be compared with Bateman and Giles (2008) study. Discussions will be provided about similarities and differences of the findings of the two studies.

Validity.

The comparison between the answers of this survey and the Bateman and Giles (2008) survey can help provide an estimated mean for validity purposes. Comparing the responses may identify changes in members’ perceptions of the APQN’s QA capacity building activities. Although the Bates and Giles (2008) survey can help estimate the
opinions of the APQN for purposes of validity, the Vietnamese version of the survey is the first of its kind as far as I am aware that gathers the perspective of the Vietnamese interested in QA activities sponsored by the APQN.

**Questionnaire.**

Like the key informant interviews, the two versions of the questionnaire—in English and Vietnamese—collected contextual, demographic, and perceptual information (see Appendix E). The Vietnamese questionnaire asked two additional questions: one about QA policy documents used in Việt Nam, and another about the survey participants’ use of APQN policies in national policymaking.

**Mode of survey collection.**

Due to the international nature of the APQN, a self-administered online survey was issued to the APQN’s online mailing list to allow for ease of reaching the widest variety of non-members and members. Because the population being surveyed is very familiar with using the Internet for communication purposes and can also speak and read English at a professional level, the online survey mode should not introduce response bias.

**Avoiding coverage and measurement errors.**

**Coverage error.**

Coverage error is the unknown gap between the target population and the sampling frame (Groves et al., 2009). The target population in this survey is the individuals who are interested in QA capacity building in Asia and the Pacific. The sampling frame includes only those individuals who have signed up for the mailing list for the APQN. Coverage error exists in this survey because there may be several individuals interested in QA capacity building activities in Asia and the Pacific who either do not know about the APQN, or who have not signed up to be on their mailing list. For example, the mailing list does not include APQN member organizations from Singapore and South Korea, although there are non-members from these countries on the mailing list. This form of coverage error is known as under coverage, where certain parts of the target population are missing. Coverage error will be smaller with the Vietnamese
survey as the target population is smaller and the sampling frame most likely includes most of the individuals in Việt Nam who are interested in QA capacity building in Asia and the Pacific.

**Under coverage.**

Under coverage can be a problem for organizations or individuals who may have an interest in the APQN, but do not have an email address. The likelihood of organizations or individuals knowing about the APQN, but not having access to the internet is small, however. For the Vietnamese version of the survey, under coverage may be a problem for organizations or individuals who are new to QA capacity building in Việt Nam, or who do not have email addresses. The likelihood of these types of organizations or individuals is also small, because the network of QA professionals is very tight in Việt Nam. The possibility of not having an email address is unlikely for QA professionals in Việt Nam because the higher education sector has received large amounts of money from the World Bank to update technology within universities and the higher education sector. Most of the individuals new to QA capacity building will have access to the internet and have an email address.

There are groups that are impacted by QA capacity building in Asia and the Pacific that the APQN is not reaching, such as student groups, faculty groups, and extremely underdeveloped countries that could benefit from its activities. Due to the APQN’s limited resources, outreach to these groups has not been undertaken. A possible limitation to the survey is linked to these groups who may have been interested in the APQN, if they knew about it.

**Avoiding duplication.**

Duplication is when individuals are in the sampling frame twice, thus potentially skewing the sampling frame data. Before sending out the participation request, the mailing list was sorted by name and organization in order to pull duplicate names and email addresses. In order to avoid clustering, only one questionnaire could be filled by one email address. The online survey tool I used, surveymonkey.com, set a limit of allowing only one response per computer by placing a cookie on the respondent’s browser. This technique is not fool-proof because it is possible that the respondent could
delete their cookies folder, which would allow them to take the survey again. The survey responses were collected by a unique identifier as well as the respondent’s IP addresses. As an extra pre-caution, I sorted the list and checked for duplicate IP addresses.

For the sampling frame of Vietnamese QA professionals the possibility of duplication does not exist because of the small number of the participants being recruited. Nonetheless, before participants were recruited, the survey list was sorted by name and organization in order to pull duplicate names and email addresses. Like the English survey, only one questionnaire can be filled by one email address.

**Ineligible units.**

An ineligible unit is an individual who is in the sampling frame, but not in the target population. There were a few ineligible units in the sampling frame. These were individuals who signed up for the mailing list, but no longer had an interest or responsibility with QA capacity building in the region, and their knowledge of the APQN was outdated. I received responses from five individuals who notified me of their ineligibility. I removed these individuals from the overall sample size, but there is a possibility that a small amount of ineligible units remained in the sample.

The possibility of ineligible units being in the sampling frame for the census of Vietnamese QA professionals is more unlikely because QA is rather new to Việt Nam. I know of most of the QA professionals in Việt Nam.

**Avoiding non-response errors.**

Non-response errors occur because there is an unknown gap between the sampling frame and the respondent pool (Groves, et al., 2009). For example, 73% (n=290) of the sampling frame was of individuals who were from organizations that were not APQN member organizations, whereas 49% (n=46) of the survey respondents were individuals from non-APQN member organizations, which shows a non-response bias.

Non-response errors can also occur when a respondent chooses to ignore answering a question either because of technical difficulties, the question is too politically sensitive, the respondent lacks knowledge to answer the question, or because the question is unintelligible to the respondent.
To avoid item non-response error, a cognitive interview and survey pretests were conducted for the English and Vietnamese versions. The survey was also designed to allow respondents to save their responses and start where they stopped in the survey, in case they were interrupted (e.g. if the internet connection was unstable, or if there was a need to translate some of the words). Having the opportunity to stop during the survey should have minimized non-response error.

To avoid non-response errors the survey requests and reminders were sent at a time when maximum participation was expected (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). Each request for participation to the online survey was conducted on Sunday evening (Eastern Daylight Time) so that QA professionals in the Asia Pacific would receive the survey invitation Monday morning (many of the QA professionals are 10 – 12 hours ahead of the survey implementation site). A reminder notice was sent twice also on Sunday evening. After receiving 86 responses, the first reminder notice was sent two weeks after the survey invitation and the second notices was sent two weeks after that. The first reminder yielded a 50% increase from the first round of responses (86 responses), giving the total number of responses to 128. The third request yielded a 30% increase in responses, giving a total of 162 responses (see Appendix F for the survey invitations and follow-up requests). Invitations were personalized, using the subscribers full name, and were sent individually to ensure that the invitation and subsequent follow-up messages were not flagged as spam (Dillman, et al., 2009).

There were a few considerations made with the Vietnamese survey for non-response errors. First, many of the Vietnamese participants were not as familiar with participating in surveys, especially online surveys, which may introduce non-response error. A mixed mode, or strictly paper-based study, was considered to address this issue. According to Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009), a mixed mode survey design can lower costs, improve timeliness, reduce coverage error, improve response rates and reduce measurement error and non-response error. Although there were many benefits to a mixed mode or paper-based study, I chose to use an online method due to the politically sensitive nature of QA in Việt Nam at this time. Offering a paper-based survey would have required additional “eyes” on the survey, including the implementer in the office, potential supervisors of those taking the survey, and possible post office personnel. Given
the sensitive nature of QA in Việt Nam and the difficulties I faced with conducting key informant interviews, I decided it was best to offer the most anonymity to participants, which also offered the opportunity for the most accurate responses. Weighing the issues of response effects for a paper-based mode or mixed mode, an online survey was the best option because it provided the most anonymity to participants, which outweighs the concerns about using a strictly online mode.

**Survey analysis.**

The two versions of the survey were analyzed separately. Because the Vietnamese version of the survey had such a small number of respondents, a descriptive analysis of the responses along with the open-ended comments is all that could be done. The English version of the survey, with 154 respondents, however, could offer some general perceptions of the APQN by those individuals who are interested in QA in Asia and the Pacific. The English survey dataset was analyzed in IBM SPSS 19.0. The survey analysis of the English version included descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation of the socio-economic status of the countries from which the participants came in order to understand if there was a relationship between the socio-economic status of the countries represented and the answers selected.

Because most answer choices were categorical variables, chi-square tests, particularly Pearson’s chi-square tests, were used to determine if an association exists between categorical variables (Warner, 2007). I checked skewness on the distribution of all the answers, which were within the acceptable range for normal distribution. Also, I used chi-square tests when the assumption of variable independence was met (Norusis, 2005).

**Coding and editing data.**

The responses were collected through an online software program called surveymonkey.com. Coding and editing was necessary for the open-ended questions regarding the respondent’s organization’s interest in the APQN, as well as for five “other” options and three “comment” options. Similar to coding and analyzing the key informant interviews, I conducted open-coding, to let the main themes emerge.
A translator was used for the comments in Vietnamese. The translation was double checked with an interpreter when the meaning of the comments could be interpreted in multiple ways. Very little editing was done of the open-ended questions. Some of the wording in the Vietnamese translations was changed in consultation with the interpreter in order to clarify the meaning.

**Priority Given to Qualitative Methods**

Qualitative methods are useful for exploring a new topic that has not been well-theorized or studied, such as higher education regionalization (Morse, 1991). This study gives priority to the data collected through qualitative methods, particularly the policy discourse analysis and key informant interviews.

There are strengths and weaknesses to all of the methods used in this study. The intent of mixing methods is to combine the strengths, while minimizing the weaknesses of each data collection method. There is a risk that the combination of these methods may weaken the entire study; for example, the limited opportunities for participant observation could have skewed my recruitment of key informants, which may bias the qualitative data collected. The rigor of the data collection and research analysis should compensate for this danger.

The strengths of using qualitative data are in the particularities and nuances that the data are expected to bring out. Policy discourse analysis examines the formalized values, norms and identities within policy documents that encourage the implementation of QA policies. Policy discourse analysis is especially useful in identifying the direction that national, regional, and international QA policies may be taking through QA capacity building efforts. The weakness to policy discourse analysis is in the static nature of the policy documents. The implementation of policies may look very different from what has been proposed; even with analysis, the documents may not depict the reality. In other words, the formally recognized values, norms and identities in the policies may not play out in the everyday experiences of the people enacting these policies.

Ethnographic methods, such as key informant interviews and participant observations, compensate for the weaknesses of policy discourse analysis by investigating the lived experiences of professionals involved in QA capacity building. In
In this particular study, these two ethnographic methods helped me understand the QA capacity building experiences of the key informants and the values, norms, and identities that underpin their work as QA professionals. Participant observation complements the key informant interviews in that as an observer I was able to watch the interpersonal dynamics and networking that went on within the conferences and annual meetings that I would not have seen in individual key informant interviews. Likewise, participant observation would not allow me to fully understand the values, norms and identities of the individual participants, which is why the key informant interviews were necessary. The weaknesses to ethnographic methods, in relation to this study, are that the small purposive sample of key informant interviews and the few meetings where participant observation was conducted may not depict some of the perspectives of QA capacity building as well as the broader opinions of QA professionals interested in QA in Asia and the Pacific that quantitative data collection can capture.

The inclusion of quantitative data, in the form of an online survey in English and Vietnamese, was intended to compensate for the weaknesses of policy discourse analysis and the ethnographic methods used. The online survey allowed me to collect the opinions of a wider audience of QA professionals interested in capacity building in Asia and the Pacific. Additionally, based on the number of survey respondents, I am able to offer a few generalizations about the usage of the APQN events and activities, which can suggest ways in which the APQN is enacting higher education regionalization. The weaknesses of an online survey include not being able to describe the nuances and complexities of the individual experiences of the respondents, nor explain how the respondents interact with the QA capacity building information that the APQN provides. By triangulating the quantitative data with the qualitative data, this study is able to overcome these weaknesses.

The three research traditions used in this study offer an on the ground view of the APQN as an example of higher education regionalization because the combined methods examine a) the norms, values, and identities of organizational actors in the policy documents, b) the norms, values and identities of individual QA actors and their experiences with QA capacity building through key informant interviews and participant observation, and c) how and to what extent survey respondents use and engage with the
APQN events and activities through a survey of the general population of QA professionals in Asia and the Pacific. Since the intent of the data collection is to provide greater clarity on a topic that has not been well-theorized, qualitative data is given priority in the data integration and analysis.

**Integrating the Findings: Triangulating the Data in the Approach and in the Design**

Each data collection method provides a different perspective. In the qualitative tradition, the policy discourse analysis allows me to discern the explicit and implicit norms, values and identities taken up in the regional QA discourses in Asia and the Pacific. The key informant interviews and participant observation highlights key values, norms and concepts of identity that may or may not be clearly evident in the policy discourse analysis. Furthermore, the quantitative data from the online survey reaches a wider group of important actors involved in QA capacity building in Asia and the Pacific, which can further explain how individuals and QA capacity building activities are contributing to higher education regionalization, and what role the APQN plays in that process.

Utilizing a methodological triangulation design with the three different data collection traditions (textual analysis, ethnographic data, and survey analysis) at three different levels (international, regional, and national), provides a strong empirical foundation from which to determine how the APQN is enacting higher education regionalization. Each method provides additional empirical evidence that more fully describes the nature of higher education regionalization as exemplified by the APQN.

The design of the study also provides three different perspectives of the APQN—international, regional, and national. Although the two main forms of data collection (qualitative and quantitative) happened sequentially, the analysis of the two main forms of data was separated by international, regional, and national levels in order to answer the three sub-questions of the thesis that relate to the norms, values, and identities of the actors at these three levels.

As such, in Chapter Five, which discusses the findings of the international actors involved in QA capacity building in Asia and the Pacific, provides an analysis of texts from international organizations and key informant interviews of GIQAC Steering
Committee members. As previously mentioned, this findings chapter does not provide quantitative data because the number of survey respondents from international organizations did not warrant a separate analysis. In other words, Chapter Five provides the context for the case study of the APQN and uses only qualitative data in the analysis.

Chapters Six and Seven present the main case study of the APQN. Chapter Six presents the findings of regional and international policy texts related to QA capacity building in Asia and the Pacific, specifically those generated by the APQN, and offers participant observation data collected at two of the APQN Annual Conferences. Chapter Seven provides analysis of key informant interviews and interprets the online survey results in order to show how the APQN actors and activities contribute to QA capacity building in the region. The integration of the qualitative and quantitative findings happens in Chapter Seven, where the qualitative data helps explain the main quantitative findings. Although the qualitative data describes the APQN as strongly aligning with the ideal-type of higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization, the open-ended questions in the online survey provides evidence for a future shift into the ideal-type of higher education regionalization as a regional form of internationalization. Therefore, the analysis of the data presented in these two chapters map current and future directions of the APQN as a regional actor sitting between international and national actors and shows how it exhibits a strong tendency to serve as an agent for the globalization of higher education in Asia and the Pacific.

Lastly, the embedded case study of Việt Nam, in Chapter Eight, brings together the analysis of texts related to Vietnamese QA policy, the key informant interviews, and the online survey results of the Vietnamese sample in order to understand the Vietnamese experience of QA capacity building and the relationships of the Vietnamese actors with the APQN. As in Chapter Seven, the qualitative data can help explain some of the main findings of the quantitative data, particularly in how the Vietnamese QA professionals perceive the role of the APQN in the region and in Việt Nam. This exploration of Việt Nam’s QA capacity building is then synthesized with the other three chapter findings in Chapter Nine to present windows of opportunities for national, regional, and international actors. Chapter Nine concludes with examining how the APQN and other regional higher
education networks may shape how higher education regionalization takes form in Asia and the Pacific.

**Explicit Theoretical Perspective Using Ideal-types**

The explicit theoretical perspective in this study uses ideal-types of higher education regionalization, as discussed in Chapter Two, to provide an analytical framework for investigating the APQN’s activities. Because the conclusion of this study is not intended for generalizing the findings for all of Asia and the Pacific, nor is it to generalize these findings for other regional QA networks, the quantitative data are not as emphasized as the qualitative data. The qualitative data express the policies and experiences of QA policymakers and researchers from the Global Initiative for Quality Assurance Capacity (GIQAC), the APQN, and Việt Nam to assess the values, norms, and regional and/or international aspirations these actors bring to national, regional and international partnerships. The quantitative data collected in the online survey were intended to articulate how the APQN’s QA capacity building activities are used by a variety of actors interested in QA in Asia and the Pacific. The survey data collect opinions about the APQN from a global audience of actors (members and non-members) interested in its activities. This quantitative data enhance the qualitative findings because it reaches more actors who can provide opinions of their experiences with the APQN’s QA capacity building efforts, thus offering perspectives that may not be represented in the key informant interviews.

The theoretical perspective of social constructivism in international relations theories looks at norms, values, and identity building through the use of ideal-types of higher education regionalization. Relating the ideal-types of higher education regionalization to theories of globalization is at the heart of the analysis and integration of the qualitative and quantitative data.

I use a convergence model of triangulation of the qualitative and quantitative findings (Erzberger & Kelle, 2003) in order to describe how the APQN is an example of higher education regionalization. A convergence model of triangulation takes a theoretical proposition and acquires two types of empirical data (in this study, qualitative and quantitative) to provide further evidence for the theoretical proposition (Erzberger &
The convergence of the online survey with the qualitative findings provides further evidence to support the claim that I will make about the APQN as depicting higher education regionalization as an agent for globalization.

**Assumptions about the APQN and QA Capacity Building**

This research is based upon a few assumptions about the capacity building activities of regional QA networks, specifically the APQN:

1. Regional QA networks reflect a larger phenomenon of higher education regionalization in international development, and in national, regional and international higher education policymaking and practice.
2. QA is an expected practice in globally competitive higher education systems.
3. QA professionals from developing countries have an international perspective of QA, which allows them to contribute to policy and practice discussions at national, regional, and international levels.
4. The nation state is the primary unit of analysis within QA capacity building activities.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study is not generalizable to other regional networks of QA. The experience of higher education regionalization by the APQN is not only unique to its region, but also unique to its specific actors. Exploring the APQN’s version of higher education regionalization may be illustrative of what is happening elsewhere in other regions with regional QA networks. The picture of regional QA networks could change completely within the next five years, depending on broader global and regional factors that cannot be fully anticipated.

There may also be a loss in translation both by the researcher and the participants in the textual analysis, ethnographic key informant interviews and participant observations, and surveys conducted with non-native English speakers. Although I have an academic background in Asian Studies, I may not pick up subtle nuances expressed by the key informants in my interviews or by the participants in their survey responses.
Trustworthiness of Data

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data analysis, I used a sequential triangulation approach with the three modes of data collection in order to confirm the validity of the findings. For some of the textual analysis, Nvivo software was used to facilitate the development of themes and findings. For the key informant interviews, 20% were audited by a colleague to determine consistency and dependability of coding. A research journal was also used to record the rationales for how data were analyzed and interpreted, and to provide an “audit trail” for others to confirm my research findings.

Ethical Considerations

As mentioned previously, according to the ethical protocol approved by the University of Toronto (see Appendix G), written consent was requested from each key informant. The Board of the APQN gave written consent regarding my participation in and observation of the Annual Meeting for 2009 and 2010.

All participants understood the voluntary nature of this study, and were given the opportunity to withdraw their participation at any time during the study. Although many participants offered to have their names attached to their comments, the anonymity of the participants was protected by assigning codes to each key informant interview and reviewing each comment in the thesis to ensure that anonymity was maintained. Survey participants were notified that their participation in the survey assumed consent in the survey. Cautionary measures were taken to maintain the privacy of the key informants including storing the audio-taped interviews and notes in a secure setting only accessible to myself.

Conclusion

This chapter has described how the research design complements the research question to understand higher education regionalization from three distinct levels: national, regional and international. In order to understand how the values, identity, and norms are socially constructed within the APQN, the study uses a mixed methods design implemented through an embedded case study.
The research design is primarily a case study of the APQN that highlights national, regional, and international activities of QA capacity building in Asia and the Pacific. The national perspective of higher education regionalization is investigated through an embedded case study of Việt Nam. The international QA actors and activities provide context for the APQN and the Vietnamese embedded case study, but more importantly are part of the case of the APQN because of the importance of actors, like the World Bank and UNESCO, in the APQN’s funding. The following chapter will discuss the international perspectives of the APQN and higher education regionalization.

The analysis of the data involves a methodological triangulation approach that was conducted sequentially, taking three modes of data (ethnographic, policy discourse analysis, and survey analysis) and weighing the findings from each data point to provide a holistic picture of the APQN. Within the data analysis, I look for preferred QA practices, concepts of globalization, recommended responses to globalization for developing countries, norms of QA, and notions of regional identity.

By identifying the preferred QA practices and the concepts of globalization I can categorize the values on the globalization spectrum presented in Chapter Two. Articulating the responses to globalization can describe the form of higher education regionalization that the APQN is taking. By examining how norms of QA are asserted, and the notions of regional identity, I can determine the direction higher education regionalization is taking in the experience of the APQN. The subsequent three chapters will address the three sub-questions related to the norms, values and identities of the QA capacity building actors involved in the APQN’s events and activities. These chapters will examine the roles of international, regional and national actors involved in QA capacity building and offer findings from policy discourse analysis, key informant interviews, participant observation, and an online survey.
Chapter Five: International Actors and QA Norm-setting in Asia and the Pacific

The multi-leveled nature of higher education regionalization involves a complex matrix of actors, policies, events, and activities involving regional multi-lateral organizations, international organizations, national development agencies, higher education institutions, ministries of education, and quality assurance agencies. Policies are often driven by certain actors and developed through specific events and activities of these various agencies. The role that international actors play in Asia and the Pacific in QA capacity building, and the type of relationship that exists with the APQN should serve to identify where the APQN sits on the spectrum of higher education regionalization mapped out in Chapter Two.

This chapter examines the international organizations focused on QA capacity building. First, I give background into the role that international actors played in the development of the APQN. Next, I provide an overview of international organizations and their QA activities. After that, I present key informant interview data from interviews I conducted in Paris in December 2009 of GIQAC Steering Committee Members. Following the analysis of the interview data, I map the three organizations and GIQAC along the globalization spectrum presented in Chapter Two in order to sketch out the international dimension of higher education regionalization as it pertains to the APQN. Finally, I conclude the chapter by showing that the role international organizations play with the APQN’s funding structure suggests that the APQN’s form of higher education regionalization is very much as a sub-set of globalization. This chapter illustrates to what extent the APQN case of higher education regionalization might be categorized as a sub-set of globalization.

International Actors Involved in the Establishment of the APQN

The APQN was founded in 2003 by a group of QA professionals in Asia and the Pacific who were members of INQAAHE. This group recognized a need for building capacity in issues related to QA in the region, and saw the establishment of a regional network as an opportunity to exchange information and expertise. To date, the membership of the APQN represents 30 of the 53 countries in Asia and the Pacific
The national members of the APQN range from small Pacific island states to post-Soviet countries and former British colonies.

Initially the group was to be a sub-network of INQAAHE, however, shortly after the first meeting, a report on QA capacity building in Asia and the Pacific was submitted to the World Bank that requested increased funding for QA capacity building in the region (Lenn, 2004). This report legitimated the purpose of the APQN and helped it establish an independent network through seed money from the DGF.

The DGF is a fund created from loan interest received by the World Bank. The fund is intended to be used on projects related to the global public good (key informant IO.3.17.09). The three-year grant awarded $1,086,600 US dollars (USD) to the APQN to coordinate and develop QA capacity building activities in the region (APQN, 2005a, 2007, 2008a). The intent of the DGF is for it to be used as a temporary fund for seed money. The attraction for the World Bank to use the DGF to fund the APQN and other regional QA networks is that this funding has a wider reach than national projects.

External funding, like the DGF, is necessary for the APQN to continue its QA capacity building efforts. Currently the APQN generates funding from two sources: the DGF and its membership fees. Membership fees are low in order to accommodate members from lower income countries.

There have been two cycles of the DGF that have been used for regional QA networks. In the first three-year cycle, the fund was used solely for the APQN. In the second three-year cycle, the fund was administered by the GIQAC, an initiative overseen by leaders from international development agencies³.

The GIQAC is a key player in the development of regional QA networks. Other regional QA networks that benefit from the GIQAC funds include the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), the Quality Assurance Network for Higher Education in Africa (AfriQAN), the Arab Network for Quality

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⁴ According to the Governance Terms, the initial membership of the Steering Committee include the Commonwealth of Learning, the German Academic Exchange Service (commonly known as DAAD), the New England Association for Schools and Colleges, and the Netherlands Organization for International Cooperation in Higher Education (NUFFIC), Agence Universitarie de la Francophonie, the Center for Comparative Education Systems and Policy, Universidad Diego Portales, Chile, and the International Association of Universities (GIQAC, 2008).
Assurance in Higher Education (ANQAHE) and the Ibero-American Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.

The GIQAC’s position within the APQN’s larger policy network could potentially influence its QA capacity building activities to focus on international norms of QA rather than on regional epistemological values and endogenous institutional needs. At the same time, the APQN is in a position to contribute an Asian Pacific perspective to international discussions of QA, and can participate as a new actor at international, regional, and national levels. Although APQN funding is from two different sources—international grants and national membership fees—the governance of the network is by elected Board members from national QA agencies, which gives emphasis on national QA capacity building.

When the DGF is no longer available, sustainability will be difficult for the APQN and other regional networks, because relying solely on member fees limits the activities it can provide. The APQN’s dependency on the DGF funding puts the GIQAC, as well as any other future donors, in an influential position over the APQN’s QA capacity building activities.

The development and sustainability of regional QA networks involves a complex network of international, regional, and national actors. The national actors are often members of other regional networks, which means that they wear “two hats” when participating in APQN activities. There are also international and regional observers of the APQN’s activities from QA agencies in other regions or other regional organizations in Asia and the Pacific that focus on QA. In order to meet all the needs of its members, the APQN must be able to bridge the differences between its members as well as bind them together towards a common goal of QA capacity building in the region.

Although the APQN’s membership fees come from national governments, QA agencies, and institutions, the individual members of the APQN come from a larger circle of QA policymakers in the region and across the globe. Most of the member organization representatives have been exposed to more than just their national policies of QA, either through APQN projects or training activities, or through regional and international capacity building projects independent of the APQN. Examining the initiatives of international organizations sponsoring QA capacity building in the Asia Pacific, can
highlight the relationship between the types of policies and the training materials that the APQN produces and promotes and of those international organizations.

**International Organizations Involved in QA Activities in Asia and the Pacific**

There have been a handful of international organizations that have been involved in QA capacity building at the international level. These organizations include UNESCO, the World Bank, and INQAAHE. Although INQAAHE is the only organization that has developed guidelines of good practices recommended for international use, UNESCO and the World Bank have been the main international organizations involved in QA activities in the Asia Pacific.

**International network of quality assurance agencies in higher education.**

As mentioned in the introduction, INQAAHE was constituted in 1991 with eight members and has grown in the past twenty years to over 230 members. The growth of INQAAHE’s membership is an indication that QA, as an international norm, has achieved what Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) would consider a norm cascade; it may be at the point where QA in higher education is a norm that has been internalized. The importance of INQAAHE is that it is made up of QA norm entrepreneurs.

INQAAHE is a non-profit network, very similar to the various QA regional networks except for its international membership. INQAAHE is funded by its membership fees and grant money received from organizations like GIQAC. It can be considered the parent organization for the APQN, which developed on the basis of the regional association of QA professionals in Asia and the Pacific within INQAAHE. Although INQAAHE was developed as an international network, according to the GIQAC section of UNESCO’s website, it is currently classified as an inter-regional organization (UNESCO, 2011b). This new designation is not just a semantic shift, but it emphasizes the new phenomenon of higher education regionalization and the importance of regional networks within the greater network of international QA.

INQAAHE is an observer at meetings of many of the regional networks that have started since. It currently identifies eleven networks of QA, and has established a working document called *Working Together* to articulate the nature of the relationships between...
INQAAHE and its regional counterparts (INQAAHE, 2007). This document acknowledges the symbiotic relationship between the quality of educational provision as a global need and the distinctiveness of regional goals and understandings of QA, and puts forth the hope that all networks can honor the distinctiveness of each other while working towards common goals.

INQAAHE is the only organization that has developed guidelines of good practices recommended for international use. The most commonly referred to INQAAHE activity within the APQN Annual Conferences was the GGP. The GGP stresses the importance of external QA agencies and emphasizes internal and external quality review (INQAAHE, 2007). As Chapter Two defined it, an external agency is one that must be at least arms-length from the government and higher education institutions. For many countries with communist roots, the external agency is just a façade. It is often directly linked to the ministry, through funding, governance, and infrastructure. In some ways, INQAAHE’s GGP has become a quality mark (“the gold standard” as voiced in an APQN conference discussion) for agencies in its network. Its website identifies those agencies that have met the GGP; so far there are four. Of the four, the Australian University Quality Assurance Agency (AUQA) is the only joint member of the APQN.

There are 35 out of 80 organizations in the APQN that are also members of INQAAHE (see Appendix H for the list of APQN and INQAAHE members in Asia and the Pacific). All APQN members would be eligible to be INQAAHE members. Curiously, there are 32 members of INQAAHE in Asia and the Pacific who are not APQN members and 48 members of APQN who are not INQAAHE members. Some of the explanation for why some INQAAHE members are not APQN members can be attributed to individual memberships that are allowed by INQAAHE, but not by APQN. Also, some of the INQAAHE members in Asia and the Pacific are research centers or professional accreditation agencies that may be more interested in connecting to similar agencies at the international level rather than peer agencies at the regional level. Those members of APQN who are not members of INQAAHE are mostly higher education institutions. Within the APQN, higher education institutions are given more status, as the membership section of Chapter Six will explain.
Members of the APQN Board of Directors have all been from INQAAHE member organizations, and the hosts of APQN Conferences have also been from INQAAHE member organizations. In the APQN constitution there are no criteria, for INQAAHE membership for Board members, nor is it a criterion for hosting a conference. The reason why APQN Board members and conference hosts tend to be INQAAHE members may be because those who receive more votes are typically those who other APQN members know from other QA conferences, such as INQAAHE.

The INQAAHE Board members have a strong connection to the APQN. Of the current 13 INQAAHE Board members and three observers of the Board, six are APQN members. Two of the three observers of the INQAAHE Board are also from APQN member organizations, and four of the INQAAHE Board members are also APQN members. The former INQAAHE President, David Woodhouse, and the current APQN President, Anthony Stella are both from AUQA, the former Secretariat for APQN.

At the founding of GIQAC, INQAAHE was considered an observer at the Steering Committee meetings; however since 2008 it now also receives funding from GIQAC, and therefore it is no longer part of the GIQAC Steering Committee meetings. The funding it has received from GIQAC was for projects related to building education and training modules, funding the participation of developing country members in the INQAAHE biennial conference, collaborating with the APQN on a project related to the development of QA in small states, developing a clearinghouse of information for QA agencies, and creating and implementing a database of QA experts with the APQN and ANQAHE.

INQAAHE’s values of diversity and inter-regional cooperation place it in between the institutional reformer and liberal internationalist perspectives. Of the three international organizations profiled in this chapter, INQAAHE seems to embrace regionalization as a regional form of internationalization. The regional form of internationalization embraces a distinct regional identity, which INQAAHE acknowledges in its Working Together document.
UNESCO.

UNESCO is the only UN agency with a mandate in higher education. Within the international arena, the functions it pursues are as a: 1) laboratory of ideas, 2) catalyst for cooperation, 3) standard-setter, 4) capacity builder, and 5) clearing house (UNESCO, 2009a). UNESCO has had a presence in the Asia Pacific, specifically in higher education, since the 1960s; it was the first international development organization to work on QA initiatives in the Asia Pacific. Three of the initiatives during this time included 1) the opening of its regional office in Bangkok, Thailand in 1961 (initially as the Asian Regional Office for Primary and Compulsory Education, now as both the Cluster office and Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education), 2) the opening of the Regional Institute for Higher Education and Development (RIHED) in Singapore in 1970, and 3) the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education signed in 1978 and revised in 2009. Other United Nations’ projects in Asia related to higher education at this early period of UNESCO’s history include a United Nations Special Fund related to higher education in Lao People’s Democratic Republic in 1961 and the establishment of the United Nations University in Tokyo, Japan, in 1973 (UNESCO, 1961; United Nations, 1973).

Although focused primarily on educational planning, UNESCO’s Institute for International Educational Planning (UNESCO-IIEP), established in 1963, has played a large role in supporting higher education, especially during times when UNESCO’s Education Directorate did not. UNESCO-IIEP’s mission is “to strengthen the capacity of countries to plan and manage their education systems” through research, training, and technical assistance (UNESCO-IIEP, 2011, p. 1). Most of the research and training modules UNESCO-IIEP has developed since 2000 focus on external QA, cross-border higher education, and accreditation. The APQN was a co-sponsor of its module on external QA. This module will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Six.

Higher education, including QA, was not high on UNESCO’s agenda from the later 1970s through the mid-1990s, which may be due in part to UNESCO’s own challenges with maintaining focus and legitimacy during a tumultuous period of its history (Mundy, 1999; Mundy & Madden, 2009). Higher education emerged back onto the agenda in 1998, on the eve of the change in the Director-General, with the World
Conference of Higher Education (WCHE) convened in Paris with over 4,000 participants. Quality was one of the four main themes of this conference.

The World Declaration of Higher Education, which was an outcome from the WCHE, defined quality as a “multi-dimensional concept” and listed the components in higher education that should be the focus of quality as “teaching and academic programmes, research and scholarship, staffing, students, buildings, facilities, equipment, services to the community and the academic environment (UNESCO, 1998, Art.11, Sect.A).” The Declaration also defined how to conduct quality measurement, through internal self-evaluation and external review, conducted openly by independent specialists, if possible with international expertise….Independent national bodies should be established and comparative standards of quality, recognized at international level, should be defined (UNESCO, 1998, Art.11, Sect.A).

The focus is clearly on norms of QA, namely, a transparent internal and external assessment, conducted by independent national bodies that use comparable international standards (and international experts, when possible). Rather than this being a declaration for quality in higher education, it is rather a declaration for QA. Harvey (2004) asserted that much of this definition related more to QA than to quality. The focus here is not just on establishing QA as a norm in higher education, but also asserting that this norm must have international applicability.

Furthermore, the Declaration also recognized that “Due attention should be paid to specific institutional, national and regional contexts in order to take into account diversity and to avoid uniformity. Stakeholders should be an integral part of the institutional evaluation process (emphasis not mine, UNESCO, 1998, Art.11, Sect.A).” Herein lies some tension with how norms of QA ought to be established. The Declaration emphasizes sensitivity to cultural contexts and diversity, yet it also supports comparative standards of quality recognized at an international level.

The tension is epistemological. On one hand, the Declaration states that diversity and cultural context must be “taken into account,” which recognizes that the epistemological understandings of quality in certain cultures may call for different forms of subjective measurement. Some cultures may see knowledge as subjective and not conducive or appropriate to external, international assessment. On the other hand, the
prescribed international “standard” of internal self-evaluation and independent (external) evaluation are largely based on a positivistic notion of knowledge as objective and independent from society (Harvey, 2007).

During the ten years between the 1998 WCHE and the 2nd World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE2) in 2009, the perspectives of QA deepened and the emphasis on international and independent standards of assessment changed. During this ten year period, UNESCO held three global forums on international quality assurance, accreditation, and recognition (UNESCO, 2002, 2005, 2007b) and two initiatives on cross-border higher education (OECD & UNESCO, 2005, UNESCO & APQN, 2007). The first forum focused mainly on higher education and trade. Some of the recommendations included developing policy frameworks and standards similar to the business world, as well as developing inclusive and broad guiding principles to encourage all institutions to adhere to them (UNESCO, 2002). The second forum focused on capacity building and developing partnerships. In this forum, various tools were discussed to assist students and higher education decision-makers on how to recognize accredited programs (UNESCO, 2005). The Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education, written in collaboration with the OECD (OECD & UNESCO, 2005) came out of this forum. The third forum focused on UNESCO’s activities related to higher education and globalization and the challenges emerging in QA capacity building. Several capacity building initiatives were identified in this forum, such as an emphasis on teacher education, student involvement in QA, and improving dialogue between higher education institutions and QA agencies (UNESCO, 2007b). Within these three fora, UNESCO provided a space for many perspectives of QA to be voiced. UNESCO was also able to attract partners to produce international normative statements and activities related to QA.

As mentioned previously, one of the outcomes of these three fora was the development of the Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education, which emphasize “national autonomy and diversity of higher education systems (OECD & UNESCO, 2005).” The Guidelines were intended to guide six different types of
stakeholders on issues related to quality in cross-border higher education (OECD & UNESCO, 2005, p. 10). The UNESCO regional office in Bangkok later teamed up with the APQN to develop a *Toolkit for Regulating Cross-Border Higher Education*, which has now been translated into Japanese and Chinese (UNESCO & APQN, 2007). The *Toolkit* was meant to complement the OECD/UNESCO *Guidelines* by providing further guidelines for setting up regulatory frameworks for importing and exporting countries. Chapter Six will discuss the *Toolkit* in greater detail.

To prepare for the WCHE2 in 2009, UNESCO held regional meetings worldwide; two were in Asia and the Pacific. One sub-regional meeting was held in Macao, and another sub-regional meeting was held in India (UNESCO, 2008, 2009b). The intent of the regional meetings was to provide a voice to higher education actors in each region that would then help UNESCO focus on the key issues that needed to be discussed at WCHE2. The two sub-regional meetings in Asia and the Pacific offered on-the-ground views of the current status of QA in the region.

The *Report for the Asia-Pacific Sub-Regional Preparatory Conference* from Macao recognized that neo-liberal policies had been infused into higher education governance, which stressed the importance of market competition to ensure accountability, efficiency and quality (UNESCO, 2008). The *Report* asserted these neo-liberal policies weakened the position of higher education as a public good. It stressed the important role national governments play in higher education provision, and noted a concern about the “blurring of the distinction between private and public higher education (UNESCO, 2008, p. 3)”, specifically in relation to public institutions relying on private sources of funding, which undermines their purposes of serving the public good. The *Report* also noted that there was a shift occurring in QA mechanisms from a process emphasis to a standards and outcomes emphasis (UNESCO, 2008, p. 4). The *Report* clearly shows concern about the privatization of higher education and the role that governments play in ensuring that higher education remains a public good.

In the *Report for the Sub-regional Conference of South, South-West and Central Asia on Higher Education*, from India, QA was recognized as necessary for

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4 The stakeholders include governments, higher education institutions and providers, student bodies, quality assurance and accreditation bodies, academic recognition bodies, and professional bodies.
protection against poor private higher education provision (UNESCO, 2009b). This Report also recognized “There is a need to create internal quality structures as well as external quality assurance to make quality transparent and the basis for students’ choice. The research component in the quality parameter should given priority (UNESCO, 2009b, p. Sect.3).” The acknowledgement that there is a lack of internal and external quality structures in the sub-region shows an acceptance of these international norms of QA, as well as an assertion that greater QA capacity building is needed to meet these norms.

In the structure of the WCHE2, quality was a sub-theme, within the main theme of equity and access. The intent of placing quality with equity and access was to recognize the role QA systems play in improving learning processes that address the needs of a variety of learners. Promoting access to higher education is one of UNESCO’s main approaches, particularly because it relates directly to its mandate in higher education. The WCHE2 Communiqué produced by conference participants emphasized linking QA and access to higher education by recommending that “regulatory and quality assurance mechanisms that promote access and create conditions for the completion of studies should be put in place for the entire higher education sector (UNESCO, 2009b, p. 4).” QA was declared to be “a vital function” of higher education. Although the Communiqué avoided defining quality, it described what a quality higher education system should be doing: “establishing quality assurance systems and patterns of evaluation as well as promoting a quality culture within institutions (UNESCO, 2009, p. 3).”

In addition, the WCHE2 included themes of regionalization, internationalization and globalization. The Communiqué strongly asserted the need to respect national sovereignty and cultural diversity, UNESCO’s trademark message. The Communiqué also noted that greater regional cooperation was desired in terms of “…qualifications, quality assurance, governance, and research and innovation” acknowledging that “higher education should reflect the international, regional, and national dimensions in both teaching and research (UNESCO, 2009b, p. 5).”

When comparing the references to quality and QA, shifts in the normative statements about QA can be seen. In 1998, quality was defined in terms of the activities
and functions of higher education, with normative statements that QA should have some internal and external QA mechanism attached to it, with international experts confirming the level of quality. The Declaration expected QA practices to be comparable on an international level. Ten years later, the Communiqué noted the importance of attaching quality to access and equity because without an emphasis on access and equity, quality higher education will be available only to the wealthy. The comparable dimension of quality criteria, particularly at the international level, or with international experts’ approval, has been replaced with a focus on cooperation and partnerships, with a new acknowledgement that this should occur at the regional level.

UNESCO assigns itself the role of being an international norm-setter, and uses its capacity to bring together many different actors to discuss standard-setting instruments. UNESCO’s focus on QA over the past decade, therefore, shows that by teaming up with other organizations, like the World Bank, OECD, or even the APQN, it has been able to maintain its norm-setting mandate. This approach has forced UNESCO to compromise on its value of protecting cultural diversity as it relates to higher education, however.

The uncritical acceptance of the role higher education plays in the global knowledge economy is at odds with the value of protecting cultural diversity. The way UNESCO partners with other economically focused organizations may down play the role of culture in the assertion of higher education practices that promote global competition. Thus, UNESCO can be seen on one hand as a global transformer in its QA normative statements, and on the other hand as a liberal internationalist in the QA policies and practices it asserts with its international partners.

**The World Bank.**

Although established in 1944 after the Second World War, the World Bank did not engage in higher education projects until 1963. Even after 1963, the World Bank did not spend much effort on higher education because of its use of “rate of return” formulas, which favored funding of primary and secondary education projects (Salmi, Hopper, & Bassett, 2009). Not until 1994, when *Higher Education: The Lessons of Experience* (World Bank, 1994) was published, did the World Bank begin to change its perspective on higher education and its importance to development. The World Bank has engaged in
several projects related to higher education. In the 1990s, a few QA initiatives were conducted in China, Indonesia, Thailand, and Việt Nam (Lenn, 2004).

Since 1994, the World Bank has produced two publications specifically on higher education, *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise* (World Bank & UNESCO, 2000) and *Constructing Knowledge Societies: New Challenges for Tertiary Education* (World Bank, 2002), and two publications on education in general, *Education Sector Strategy Update* (World Bank, 2005) and *Learning for All: Investing in People’s Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development* (World Bank, 2011b). The publications on higher education mention QA as an important component.

The main recommendations of *The Lessons of Experience* are to: 1) diversify higher education systems through the introduction of private higher education, 2) offer incentives for public institutions to diversify funding sources, and 3) for governments to restructure their role in higher education (World Bank, 1994). Although *The Lessons of Experience* did not mention QA mechanisms *per se*, such mechanisms as self-evaluation, independent assessment, and accreditation were highlighted as ways to improve efficiency, equity, and quality of higher education institutions in developing countries.

QA is a main theme in *Constructing Knowledge Societies*, which asserts that QA should be instituted “for all types of institutions (World Bank, 2002, p. 88).” The Bank references a document it commissioned as a contribution to the WCHE in 1998 (El-Khawas, et al., 1998). The main elements of a QA system were identified as: 1) reliance on semi-autonomous agencies, 2) agreement on explicit standards, 3) a self-study conducted initially and then followed by an external peer-review body, 4) a written recommendations report, 5) public reporting of results, and 6) the recognition that the evaluation process is as equally as important as the results.

The *Education Sector Strategy Update* does not discuss details about QA as does *Constructing Knowledge Societies*; however, it continues to assert the World Bank’s connecting of QA mechanisms to monitoring the quality of private higher education provision (World Bank, 2005). QA is also acknowledged as an initiative worthy of DGF funding (at the time of publication the APQN was receiving funding from the DGF).

In *Learning for All: Investing in People’s Knowledge and Skills to Promote Development*, QA is an expected practice within the “systems-approach” methodology
that the World Bank promotes in this document. QA is given as an example of a component connected to lower middle countries that need to focus on improving higher education to meet workforce demands. *Learning for All* also asserts that when clear policies and regulations have been established in a developing country, QA policies and practices can assist higher education systems to efficiently and effectively turn resources into learning outcomes (World Bank, 2011b).

Between 2001-2008, the World Bank has embarked on new commitments in tertiary education that total $2.278 billion dollars (Salmi, et al., 2009). New commitments mean that new projects began during this seven year period. Also during 2001-2008, $626 million dollars was loaned to tertiary education projects (Salmi, et al., 2009). To understand the total of new commitments and loans from Asia and the Pacific, Table 5.1 shows that from 2000-2011 the total costs of higher education projects, active and closed, in Asia and the Pacific is $1.366 billion dollars; approximately $925 million dollars have been loaned to higher education projects in Asia and the Pacific.

There are distinctions between the types of loans the World Bank offers that are worth noting. I will discuss four overarching loan types. First, the International Development Association (IDA) loans, known as credits, are for the world’s poorest countries. IDA terms include zero to very low interest with repayment plans that can stretch up to 40 years, sometimes with a five to ten year grace period (World Bank, 2011d). Second, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) loans are for middle-income countries. There are several IBRD loans, the rates of which range between one to eight percent; repayment can last up to 30 years with a five to eight year grace period (World Bank, 2011a). Third, Trust funds (TF) are financial arrangements made with external donors for specific purposes and are accounted for separately from World Bank loans (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Capacity Building Programme, 2009). Fourth, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) is an independent institution from the World Bank, yet it coordinates its lending programs with World Bank projects. The IFC is the world’s largest multi-lateral investor in health and education, providing financing to businesses to strengthen or develop emerging markets (International Finance Corporation, 2011a; Robertson, 2009; Robertson, et al., 2007). Although Table 5.1 has three more years worth of data than the Salmi et al. data (2009),
it is clear that a large percentage of the World Bank’s higher education projects are in Asia and the Pacific. Besides lending for projects related to higher education, the World Bank consults with countries, such as China, Malaysia and Kazakhstan, on policy advice and how to establish a knowledge economy (Salmi, et al., 2009).

In order to demonstrate the types of QA policies and practices the World Bank supports, Table 5.1 identifies the QA components in each higher education project in Asia and the Pacific since 2000. For projects with specific work components related to QA, the cost of the components typically range from $1-3 million USD. There are many common components related to QA that cut across the national projects in Table 5.1, which illustrates the QA norm-setting role the World Bank asserts through higher education capacity building projects in Asia and the Pacific.

Common elements to most of the QA work components include: increased institutional autonomy, QA units in each university, incentive-based competitive grants or funding mechanisms, self-evaluation, peer-review, accreditation, independent QA agencies, and transparency in the reporting of QA results. Some less common elements are: developing performance indicators, institutional ranking, performance based contracts for newly autonomous institutions, and quality audits. Uncommon elements include implementing government strategies developed by civil society and public and private institutions (Bangladesh) and negotiating with the Board of Investment to develop legal regulatory frameworks for foreign higher education provision (Việt Nam).

Rather than asserting normative standards for QA through policy statements and discussion fora, as UNESCO mostly does, the World Bank implements QA practices that are compatible with values of market competition, innovation, transparency and free trade. As to be expected, the World Bank sits mainly within neo-liberal and liberal institutionalist perspectives with the goal of using QA as a mechanism to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public and private resources used for higher education. The World Bank would look at higher education regionalization as a means to solidify a global higher education market through common principles agreed upon at the regional level. The World Bank’s perspective on regional QA networks, therefore, is to build capacity for global market competition.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Dates of Project</th>
<th>Cost of Project (US$ million)$^5$</th>
<th>Name of Project</th>
<th>QA Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>2005-2013</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Strengthening Higher Education Program</td>
<td>Design of governance and quality accreditation and assurance system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(60 IDA loan, 5 TF loan; disbursed 37.72 as of June 2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Increased institutional autonomy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Establish self-evaluation process</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Establish QA Agency with funding and staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>QA units in each university</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Facilitate discussion between QA Agency &amp; universities in development of QA system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Third Programmatic Education Sector Development Support Credit</td>
<td>Government to implement strategy for higher education sector developed by academics from public and private institutions and representatives from civil society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>2009-2013</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>Higher Education Quality Improvement</td>
<td>“Low reform intensive project”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(IDA loan; 10.7 disbursed as of July 2011)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Competitive Academic Innovation Fund with accountability mechanisms</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Improve strategic capacity of University Grants Commission (UGC) and institutional capacity of universities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^5$ For projects that are still active, the total costs may change based on the value of the US dollar and the lack of extra risks in the project implementation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2007-2009</td>
<td>250.92</td>
<td><strong>Technical/Engineering Education Quality Improvement Project</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(IDA loan)</td>
<td>Introduction of internal QA mechanisms</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fast-tracked accreditation by National Board for Accreditation (NBA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>2005-2012</td>
<td>79.75</td>
<td><strong>Higher Education for Relevance and Efficiency</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(IBRD loan; approx. 40 disbursed as of February 2010)</td>
<td>Assist BAN-PT to develop an accreditation program</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Competitive grants for higher education institutions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Performance-based contracts to newly autonomous higher education institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>2007-2013</td>
<td>138</td>
<td><strong>Better Education through Reformed Management and Universal Teacher Upgrading</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(24.5 IBRD, 61.5 IDA, 52 TF; 69.31 disbursed as of November 2010)</td>
<td>Develop accreditation process for teacher training institutions</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Implement Accreditation Incentive Grants</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teaching methods are revised to be in line “with international practice”</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Involve a mix of incentives: career development pathways, professional recognition, advancement opportunities and financial compensation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>2007-2014</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td><strong>Second Higher Education Project</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(60 IDA &amp; 1.9 TF loans; 22.26 disbursed as of May 2011)</td>
<td>Assist UGC to implement program-based and institution-based QA &amp; accreditation system</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Voluntary self-assessment and peer-review through defined criteria derived from generic and discipline specific benchmarks</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quality audit process in parallel to provide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Program Description</td>
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<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Higher Education Support Program</td>
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<td>Institutions with current assessment of quality.</td>
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<td>Institutions who go through quality audit receive $3000 USD, and those who go</td>
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<td>through QA receive $5000 USD.</td>
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<td>Reports are made public.</td>
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<td>Eventually make the QA Agency an autonomous body</td>
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<td>Reinforce and create more Accreditation Councils and finish implementation of</td>
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<td>Quality Enhancement Cells in public universities and begin implementation in</td>
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<td>private universities</td>
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<td>Develop criteria for domestic institutional ranking</td>
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<td>Develop accreditation manuals that spell out self-assessment procedures</td>
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<td>Pilot accreditation of programs</td>
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<td>Sri Lanka</td>
<td>2003-</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>Improving Relevance and Quality of University Education</td>
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<td>2010</td>
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<td>Establish a Board for Quality Assurance, under the UGC, which eventually will</td>
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<td>become an independent accreditation body</td>
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<td>Institute Performance Indicators related to performance of graduates in the labor</td>
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<td>Competitive Quality Enhancement Funds for universities to engage in reform</td>
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<td>Develop comprehensive evaluative review system</td>
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“consistent with international best practice” for all private and public institutions (World Bank, 2003)

Results of reviews posted on UGC website

Establish procedures for accrediting national and international QA agencies

Negotiate with Board of Investment to develop regulatory and legal frameworks for accrediting foreign higher education provision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vietnam</th>
<th>2001-2008</th>
<th>88.7</th>
<th>Higher Education Project 1</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Establish Higher Education Quality Assessment Center to conduct quality audits and provide “objective assessments” of system and institutional quality</td>
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<tr>
<th>Vietnam</th>
<th>2001-2007</th>
<th>35.75 (5.62 Việt Nam, 10.29 DFID, 19.84 IDA)</th>
<th>Primary Teacher Development Project</th>
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<td>Develop framework for accreditation of formal teacher prep courses and the establishment of self and external evaluation</td>
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<td>Develop evidence-based professional standards</td>
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<td>Implement a communications strategy to provide achievements to gain “credibility and currency” with public and the profession</td>
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<tr>
<th>Vietnam</th>
<th>2007-2012</th>
<th>70.5 (59.4 IDA &amp; 4.8 TF, 4.8 Japan PHRD grant; 29.28 of IDA &amp; TF)</th>
<th>Higher Education Project 2</th>
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<td>Adopt a set of minimum quality standards against which higher education institutions will be required to assess themselves</td>
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<td>Establish independent</td>
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<td>Việt Nam</td>
<td>2009 &amp; 2010</td>
<td>100 (IDA)</td>
<td>Higher Education Development Policy- First &amp; Second Operations</td>
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<td>disbursed as of April 2011)</td>
<td>accreditation mechanisms to reinforce the minimum standards</td>
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<td>Allocate Teaching and Research Improvement Grants on a competitive basis</td>
<td>Increase autonomy of higher education institutions</td>
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<td>Develop more robust and effective institutional planning and link to continuous review</td>
<td>Develop quality indicators such as number of articles published in internationally refereed academic journals</td>
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<td>Issue a regulation to improve information about higher education institutions performance for students and their families, employers, and graduates</td>
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<td>Issue a regulation that establishes independent review agencies</td>
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<td>Issue a plan for the development of a “culture of quality” and accreditation procedures</td>
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<td>Issue a regulation for the evaluation of teachers/professors by students, peers, and managers</td>
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<td>Develop new standards for public financing and auditing of higher education</td>
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Robertson (2009) identifies three ways in which the World Bank is building capacity: 1) through policy coherence and alignment, 2) trade, and 3) emerging markets and private financing. Building capacity through policy coherence means aligning policies between international agencies, like those discussed in this chapter. Building capacity through trade involves activities such as cross-border higher education, with an emphasis on cross-border supply of education from exporters to importers, as I will discuss later in the Vietnamese embedded case study. Building capacity through emerging markets identifies higher education as a new market for private financing, as seen in the “privatization” of higher education. The privatization of higher education does not just mean opening up the higher education sector to include private higher education institutions, but it also includes the private financing of loans for higher education and private funding of public higher education.

QA mechanisms and QA policy initiatives such as the GIQAC, a co-sponsored initiative with UNESCO and World Bank, certainly fit within Robertson’s (2009) “policy coherence and alignment” classification. She contends that the World Bank is aligning itself with other international organizations (such as UNESCO and OECD) in order to synchronize policies that allow for freer trade, thus deepening and extending the global

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6 Review of NMUP project documents show that the Bank is using VND amounts, rather than USD amounts, possibly because of the constant fluctuation of the Dong and the Dollar.
services economy (Robertson, 2008, 2009). The partnership between UNESCO and the World Bank, and the necessary combining of operational processes of two highly bureaucratic organizations in order to successfully implement the GIQAC, certainly provides a strong example for Robertson’s (2009) claim of the World Bank’s strategy of building capacity through policy coherence.

**The global initiative for quality assurance capacity.**

Combining the strengths of both the World Bank and UNESCO’s experiences of QA capacity building, the GIQAC was formally established in January 2008. Instead of applying for the World Bank’s DGF for individual regional networks, as the APQN did, an application was submitted to the DGF proposing the establishment of GIQAC. The proposal had GIQAC administered by UNESCO, with World Bank DGF funds, and overseen by a Steering Committee of international, regional and national organizations.

The initial amount requested from the DGF was $1.28 million USD (World Bank, 2007a). In-kind support included the cost of staffing the Secretariat, covered by UNESCO. The formation of the GIQAC would allow multiple networks to receive smaller grants for focused QA capacity building activities. For example, between 2008-2009, $585,000 USD was given to five regional and inter-regional QA networks for QA projects (UNESCO, 2011c). Having a GIQAC body also allowed for an internationally coordinated effort at QA capacity building.

The Steering Committee meets bi-annually to review applications for funding and to discuss the progress of the funded projects as well as to discuss future planning. Since 2008, the GIQAC Steering Committee has met eight times, twice at other international higher education conferences, 1) the WCHE2 and 2) the Open Educational Resource Forum sponsored by UNESCO and Commonwealth of Learning. When I interviewed key informants in December 2009, the membership of the Steering Committee did not include an Asian Pacific member, although several of the organizations represented are involved in QA capacity building in Asia and the Pacific. Commonwealth of Learning sponsors the participation of a GIQAC Steering Committee member from the global South by paying for travel costs to and from the GIQAC meetings.
Supporting international (INQAAHE) and regional QA networks through funding QA capacity building at national and regional levels offers the possibility to strengthen higher education in several developing countries around the globe. The goal of the GIQAC is to:

- build capacity to engender robust quality assurance practices and systems in developing countries and territories as well as countries in transition by supporting training and knowledge-sharing activities; such activities shall be proposed and undertaken by autonomous regional and international nonprofit networks of quality assurance professionals and institutions (GIQAC, 2008, p. 3).

GIQAC also offers the possibility that non-state transnational actors play an influential role in the establishment of QA policies and practices in developing countries.

The current funding schedule of GIQAC is to offer one-year grants for projects related to QA capacity building. Regional networks and INQAAHE propose to the Steering Committee a series of projects overseen by the network members that are intended to have a regional impact. The first two years of GIQAC’s funding required the networks to submit a simple evaluation scheme at the end of the projects; however, since the WCHE2, GIQAC launched an evaluation framework that networks must follow to measure the effectiveness of each project. The rationale for this framework was one of several themes discussed with the key informants.

**Findings from Key Informant Interviews**

In March and December 2009 I interviewed nine of the GIQAC Steering Committee members to learn more about GIQAC and their perceptions of the challenges to QA capacity building and the rationales for supporting regional QA networks. The main criterion for selecting informants was that they had an intimate understanding of the APQN. Requests for interviews were sent via email to twelve people who were serving on the Steering Committee and/or who were involved in its administration. In recruiting key informants, I tried to achieve breadth in the geographical regions represented as well as in the distribution of men and women.

Of the nine Committee members, seven were men, two were women. Five of them had doctoral degrees. Two were from Africa, three were from North America, one was from South America, and three were from Europe. At the time of my interviews,
there were no representatives from Asia and the Pacific on the Steering Committee. Several of the key informants were working in different countries than their home country; three were working on different continents from their home country. All but two of the key informants were working in international organizations, either multi-lateral or non-governmental.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded for themes related to the key informants’ perceptions about the challenges to QA capacity building, the role of GIQAC in terms of funding regional QA networks, APQN’s QA capacity building activities and the QA activities of international organizations. As with the other groups of key informant interviews, I used open-coding to identify themes in order to allow the ideas of the GIQAC key informants to emerge. After the initial themes were identified, I compared the codes within the themes, merging some themes and creating new ones (see Appendix B). In my analysis, I noted areas of saturation and common phrases used, and I also paid particular attention to ideas about norm-setting, underlying values and the perceived benefits of regional QA networks. The eight main themes identified in the interviews were: 1) QA understanding, 2) challenges for QA, 3) QA capacity building, 4) criteria for successful regional QA networks, 5) sustainability and importance of regional QA networks, 6) actors who should be involved in QA policymaking, 7) inter-regional and international QA collaboration, and 8) GIQAC operations.

“You can set up standards, and then you play the game”.

The understanding of QA by the key informants was largely based on the perspective of working as university presidents or high-level higher education specialists. Most key informants acknowledged the two main components of QA: internal and external assessment. One key informant noted “…the basics of it are institutional self-assessment with some kind of visit to check it out (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC6),” and continued “and then it can get more or less complicated after that (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC6).”

Citing UNESCO’s Communiqué from the WCHE, one key informant stated that quality was a “multi-dimensional concept” and contended that the internationalization of QA was one of the new dimensions of higher education discussed at the WCHE2 in 2009.
The internationalization of QA is mainly driven by the increase in cross-border higher education and the expansion of QA as a mechanism in higher education systems over the past ten years.

When asked about international standards, a few of the key informants resisted this notion, which is similar to the position of some APQN key informants whose views will be discussed in Chapter Seven. “I don’t think that one international standard is possible. It’s good to have a set of international guidelines, but not too many of them (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC5).” Another key informant believed that QA was not a western notion, but rather based on the paradoxical notion of measurement:

… in quality assurance it is becoming, from day to day, more part of the core of the whole systems of quality assurance; the idea of having indicators whereby you can attribute a numerical coefficient to different and very complex types of activities. And that I find in the long run a very difficult problem because I don’t find that many of the activities which you would like to see if they have a standard—a quality standard—if they are achieving a quality standard. They are not easy to measure (GIQAC.12.09.09.SC4).

The positivistic ideas of measurement, highlighting the conflict between qualitative vs. quantitative measurement practices came up in many of the interviews, possibly because at the time of the interviews, the Steering Committee was discussing GIQAC’s own performance indicators for its funded activities. The question about getting the information that they need to understand if capacity building is happening was one of the issues being discussed with their own QA mechanisms.

Another issue was how well those who were doing the measurements can “play the game”. When asked, a few of the key informants did not see a bias with the western epistemological roots of QA, although one acknowledged that it was congruent with western culture (GIQAC.12.09.09.SC4, GIQAC12.08.09.SC2):

In the Anglo-Saxon culture, and in the culture of OECD countries, the idea of setting up standards, and that you work to satisfy a standard, is part of a national culture. It’s part of the modernity of the institutions, it’s the way of how you understand the world works. And that’s not the case in many developing countries. You can set up standards, and then you will play the game. You will learn to play the game… And it is this game. I see people coming from American, North American foundations, and they have this innocence, about ‘oh, they have accepted these standards, and
they are using these standards. This is fantastic, and it’s a great leap forward.’ But it’s stupid, because what people have done is accepted the standards from the mouth, but then they are trying now, they are learning, to play the game that is defined by those standards, but not the game accepted by the standards’ point of view. They’re using the standards (GIQAC.12.09.09.SC4).

Because QA is attached to money—either directly or indirectly—“using the standards” without actually embracing the spirit of the standards, is a risk. Another key informant felt that QA measurements should be changed every five years in order to keep university presidents “on their toes (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC6).”

This same key informant reflected on QA starting out locally, rather than internationally:

I think people start off with the assumption that they are doing this locally. And they start out with their own definition of what quality might be. It might be as basic as the guy showing up to teach. But as they get into the network, quality assurance is like an overcooked spaghetti once you start pulling one noodle you get the whole lot rather quickly and it’s quite complicated (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC6).

Part of the tension here is making QA simple enough to meet some minimum expectations, which is important for developing systems of higher education, while not making it so simplistic that it becomes a game and not an authentic exercise to improve quality.

“Quality assurance is not a job for universities only”.

Although QA is mainly rooted in the evaluation of higher education institutions, there was a clear understanding among the key informants that a variety of stakeholders were necessary in the process. Four challenges to QA policymaking and procedures were identified by the key informants as: 1) faculty and institutions, 2) private vs. public institutions, 3) cross-border higher education, and 4) individual capacity.

First, the challenges that developing countries face when developing QA policies and practices were often based on resistance from faculty and institutions. One key informant noted there are “…cases of political and cultural shifts in the world where university professors are considered the captain of the ship, to moving to a culture where you are evaluated… This process is very important (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC3).” This shift
of having fair, unbiased evaluations may be challenging in certain systems where everyone knows each other, a problem identified in a few APQN and Vietnamese key informant interviews.

Second, a challenge to QA is how to monitor both private and public institutions. Since private higher education is a relatively recent development in many developing countries, there is an issue with having the necessary resources to maintain quality while expanding the system. Besides the resource question, there is also the challenge with the competition between private and public institutions and the acceptance of QA mechanisms being imposed on well-established public institutions. One key informant mentioned that in his country some of the public institutions had legally challenged the introduction of QA mechanisms (GIQAC12.09.09.SC4).

Third, a challenge related to the private and public institutions conundrum, is cross-border higher education, which often falls through the cracks of developing QA systems. Guidelines for cross-border higher education, therefore, are necessary to assist countries who rely on other QA systems to monitor the quality of cross-border higher education within their country (as is the case in Việt Nam). The challenge with monitoring cross-border higher education does not just stop at whether a national system is equipped for it, but also what sort of system they adopt to monitor quality. One key informant mentioned a visit to a small country in the Middle East where they were proud to have adopted the American system, and this key informant replied “‘no, no, it’s very good for the States….but, you have to develop your own (GIQAC.12.0709.SC5).”

Fourth, the individual capacity of higher education institutions, ministers of education, and QA agencies can also be a problem for QA policymaking and implementation. One main challenge mentioned in several interviews was the ability to write a proposal for grant money, particularly when starting QA from scratch; to implement projects; to have a budget, and to spend money (GIQAC12.07.09.SC3, GIQAC12.07.09.SC6, GIQAC.12.08.09.SC8, GIQAC12.09.09.SC4). The GIQAC Steering Committee was very much aware of the individual capacity needs of those they support. The challenge for GIQAC is to have a rigorous procedure for its beneficiaries, while at the same time not excluding those who don’t have the capacity to follow rigorous procedures.
“It’s people and procedures”.

QA capacity building, as implied in the previous section on challenges to QA policymaking and implementation, is mainly about improving the capacity of people and developing or strengthening existing QA procedures in higher education and QA agencies. Fundamentally, as one of the key informants from Africa commented, “If you need education activities to develop how to make life better, we have to focus on quality assurance (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC1).” For this key informant, QA is a way to align educational activities towards the advancement of society. In order to advance society, this same key informant acknowledged “we have to know what is quality assurance? And I think if we cannot know that, if we do not know that, we cannot get the results (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC1).” Knowing what QA is requires educating individuals and creating a framework that can measure quality in higher education. This process of building QA capacity through education and policy frameworks takes time. One of the key informants acknowledged,

We have to step back and recognize that building capacity takes a long time. It’s not three years or five years, it’s 10 to 15 years and we will have to look at it. That’s why we’re pushing them [the recipient’s of GIQAC funds] to look at the results framework, to question themselves (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC3).

This comment was made for the regional QA networks, but it applies equally to higher education institutions and QA agencies in that educational change, particularly in higher education, takes time. QA agencies must be aware of the time-frame necessary to steer higher education institutions in new directions.

Another key informant from Europe articulated three terms of capacity building: 1) short-term, 2) medium-term, and 3) long-term. In the short-term category, international cooperation was necessary. In the medium-term, an independent decision-making framework with QA structures being built within universities with buy-in from leaders was critical. The long-term capacity building required evaluation linked to accreditation models, benchmarking standards within the region, and involving non-university stakeholders in the process (GIQAC.12.08.09.SC8).
Speaking to the multi-dimensional nature of QA, one key informant reflected on the projects that GIQAC has funded and offered some insight into the heart of what they are trying to do when they talk about capacity building:

The concept of helping to develop capacities is a very difficult and complex concept. What is it really to create capacities? Is it people? Is it institutions? Is it types of interactions? Is it knowledge? It’s probably all of that, but how can you understand, or try to understand what is happening in practice, when you are developing very different things, and to all those things you are giving it one name, which is developing capacities. It’s going to be a challenge. It’s also a challenge for us….now that we are already having, given the first round of grants, now having received the first round of reports, we will sit down and look more closely at what we are trying to do, from the Steering Committee. We haven’t talked until now very directly with the networks, what they understand what they are doing…. (GIQAC.12.09.09.SC4).

Measuring the outcomes of the GIQAC’s funded projects is also an area where GIQAC perceives it has been weak and is trying to strengthen its QA activities through its own performance indicators. Another capacity building issue mentioned in the key informant interviews was the need for sub-regional cooperation. Some key informants believed that sub-regional networks were more effective for capacity building than regional networks (GIQAC.12.08.09.SC2, GIQAC12.08.09.SC8, GIQAC12.07.09.SC1). This concept of sub-regional networks speaks to the idea of higher education regionalization in that sub-regional networks are often more closely aligned culturally, politically, or economically than larger pan-regional networks like the APQN.

“People who understand the importance of it, and drive the process”.

The criteria for successful regional QA networks, given by key informants, were also largely related to the quality of networking done at national, regional and international levels: “you get people with the right connections, and they want to get the job done (GIQAC.12.07.08.SC7)” Many key informants acknowledged that focus, organization, professionalism, team work, and political acumen of Board members and the Secretariats were important for the success of the QA networks.

The APQN was seen as a success by all of the key informants. One commented …what works really well with APQN….is that they are well-organized, they are very professional, they are really professionals in quality
assurance. They are… people who know their region, who know the quality assurance needs in the region, and are accepted, politically and professionally, as experts in their field, in the region. And they know how to work with their colleagues. Perhaps it’s a region where people work well together, perhaps not. It’s just that they are extremely good at it. They are very well organized, they are focused, and they are very professional….. It’s true, money does help. Without the money you don’t go anywhere. But with the money, you need to have some sort of focus, and organization, and professionalism, as well as the political links that you need to function.

MM\(^7\): Political. What do you mean by political links?

GIQAC 12.08.09.SC7

You always have a lot of actors, a lot of stakeholders, and quality assurance is linked to money, usually. So you have a lot of stakeholders involved. And you have to make sure that all the stakeholders work together and with you in an effective manner. And so you have to have the network you need, in terms of peers and groups, people that work together. You have to know who is doing what and you have to have a comparative advantage in the group.

The APQN, according to many of the key informants, has figured out a successful strategy to utilize everyone in the network. Another reason why the APQN is successful is because it is familiar with the DGF, having been one of its first regional QA recipients. They understand how to deliver what is required to continue to receive funding.

The passion and commitment of those running the QA networks are important criteria for success. One key informant recognized that

… over time they were able to translate that into institutional culture. I think the APQN has been one of the most successful. Their experience has been shared with other networks, and I think the secret…is people who happen to be there…are more energetic. I think it’s possibly that. It may also be that the institutions in that part of the world were more ready to embrace quality assurance…. one of the most important facts, is that you get people who understand the importance of it and drive the process (GIQAC.12.08.09.SC2).

Driving the QA process requires QA professionals who have established reputations both in their home country as well as in the region. International credibility also helps, as the next chapter will describe in the analysis of the APQN key informant interviews.

\(^{7}\) MM refers to myself.
“Only networked societies will be competitive in the future”.

The rationales for the importance and sustainability of regional networks were mainly related to the value for money that regional QA networks offered for QA capacity building. One key informant described how the regional QA networks were making a difference:

They can be different because they are active at the regional level. They know the needs of the regional level. So they can take what they know at the international level and try to quantify at the regional level, and have something they can use to satisfy, what can I call it, their view of the people. They’re living the situation, they know the weakness. So if you know the weakness of something you can try to get something to solve the problem. But it’s not the same at the international level. You can also know, but the strategy of when you can do it, with whom; the regional level can make a difference (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC1).

This key informant was talking specifically about the needs of society, which according to him differ by region. Regional networks can fine-tune QA processes that may be introduced at the international level to regional and local needs. Although this same key informant wanted to point out, “the regional is not an obligation of taking international and applying it regionally (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC1).”

When asked how regional QA networks can make a difference, key informants shared initiatives such as distance education, cross-border higher education, sharing operation manuals, exchanging information with each other, making QA a priority at the national and regional levels, and opening up a networking forum between QA agencies and higher education institutions (GIQAC.12.08.09.SC8, GIQAC.12.08.09.SC7, GIQAC.12.07.09.SC3). One key informant noted,

It seems to me that…the water level is constantly rising on quality assurance and government interest. By the time it finishes, there should more or less be enough official activity, and governments should see that it’s in their interest to have some sort of network to pull it together, that it will be sustained in that way (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC6).

Once QA has been introduced to governments, and a little funding has been provided for it, national governments tend to see its value and provide more funding for QA activities in the future. The sustainability of the GIQAC, and regional QA networks, rests on the
assumption that government interest, whether by bi-lateral donors or national ministries, will continue even after the DGF funding runs out.

The funding of GIQAC and the QA networks was certainly on their minds when I met the key informants in December 2009. When the topic of sustainability of GIQAC and the networks came up, often a key informant would remark on a discussion they had in the Steering Committee meetings. One key informant believed that funding for these sorts of initiatives would happen one way or another, “It’s human nature, you don’t give money to someone if someone else is. But if someone else doesn’t and you think it’s important, then you scratch together and see what you can do (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC6).”

The importance of funding QA networks also relates to the cooperation and expertise shared among and across networks. One key informant drew on international development theory to assert that “only networked societies will be competitive in the future (GIQAC.12.08.09.SC8).” He believed that from an operational level, sub-regional networks would work better and be more effective than large regional networks like the APQN or the AAU’s AfriQAN.

“It’s very difficult unless you go regionally”.

Most of the key informants agreed on the actors that should be involved in QA policymaking, specifically higher education institutions, the state, and the private sector. International QA policymaking should also involve these types of actors, especially regional actors. One key informant who had been involved in many of UNESCO’s QA policy discussions over the years stated

Whenever you try to do from top-down, from the global level, it’s very difficult unless you go regionally. To give you one example, one of the issues we discussed at the global forums is establishing the World Quality Register. And it was impossible, we decided. But now it is reappearing in Europe… as a tool of the Bologna process. And then in the end if you develop it regionally, then you can come to a sort of global instrument or share codes of good practice (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC5).

Regional QA actors and networks, therefore, become important to sharing and diffusing international norms of QA. Regional QA actors mediate between the global ideals of international actors and the unique realities of national actors. Regional actors can also
negotiate between the important cultural and regional identities and their international aspirations.

Some key informants identified regional actors that should be involved in QA policymaking such as economic centers, university research centers, centers of excellence, and civil society, as well as having a geographical organization of stakeholder groups that correspond with the regional QA networks (such as regional student associations); letting non-governmental actors drive the process. Individual universities, particularly the strongest universities, are also important for national and regional QA development (GIQAC.12.08.09.SC2). When asked about international actors who should be involved in QA policymaking, most key informants mentioned UNESCO, the World Bank, INQAAHE, and the OECD.

“We can learn together”.

Most key informants offered ideas about how international and regional organizations could work more closely together. The general tone of the key informants, particularly those from UNESCO and World Bank, is that there are opportunities for more collaboration, so that QA initiatives are not duplicated. Although the terms “inter-regional” and “international” were not defined in the interviews, inter-regional was generally assumed to be activities between distinct and defined regional organizations. International collaboration, in this context, referred to activities sponsored by international organizations. As previously mentioned, INQAAHE would be considered more an inter-regional organization than an international organization because of the regional QA networks affiliated to it.

As could be expected because of their direct involvement with GIQAC, the interviews with key informants from UNESCO and the World Bank offered the most information about how inter-regional and international initiatives were working and could work better. “We are trying to promote inter-regional dialogue (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC5)” commented a key informant from UNESCO. Another key informant recognized

Certainly the World Bank is working on many projects in different countries, and these projects often have a quality assurance component. We were remarking that we should make a systematic link to what is happening at the national level and the regional level. Similarly,
UNESCO’s offices and all the regional initiatives they should talk to each other to avoid duplication and to join forces (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC3).

One of GIQAC’s roles was identified by a key informant: “…now what we are trying to do, or what the regions are trying to do, is to align (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC5).” Aligning with each other through regional networks supports further integration of QA initiatives at an international level. Linking what is happening at the national and the regional level to international issues would complete the norm life cycle, as discussed in Chapter One.

GIQAC’s support of individual regional networks often includes funding participation in international conferences where representatives from all the regional QA networks attend and contribute. Having regional QA network representatives at international conferences provides a space for them to network with each other and with other potential donors. Often this networking and sharing continues across the regional QA networks when they return home.

GIQAC has funded delegates from the APQN to assist the ANQAHE and AfriQAN in developing the operational structures and writing their grants for funds from GIQAC. A key informant sees this inter-regional activity as South-South cooperation: “We support these regional networks, but then we also try to have them support each other, so we have a sort of South-South cooperation (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC5).”

In other words, the regional QA networks can link to global issues with a regional approach. One key informant observed how the APQN works with regional and international initiatives:

… there are certain activities that the APQN does that are in harmony with activities in the Arab states region and with INQAAHE. And in that sense they are working on a common issue, at the regional level. The Brisbane Communiqué, is a regional perspective, but it’s linked to other international issues. The Chiba Principles are linked to the APQN quality assurance guidelines, which is an international instrument, but linking them to regional specificities. I think that the APQN is not working in a bubble. It is tying into major international issues, but it’s working with a regional specificity, which needs to be done (GIQAC.12.08.09.SC7).

Working with a regional specificity allows QA networks to adopt international QA norms that are compatible with regional values.
“After all, it is public money”.

GIQAC operations involve coordination between two highly bureaucratic organizations, the World Bank and UNESCO, which include different operational practices, procurement procedures, contracts, institutional cultures, and member countries. The merging of business practices in order to achieve the objective to build QA capacity is a feat that should not be overlooked. The bottom line with GIQAC funding is that, as one key informant astutely notices, “after all, it is public money (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC6).” The integration of operational practices of GIQAC between the World Bank and UNESCO may serve as a model for greater collaboration in the future.

What became the GIQAC was never intended to become a permanent mechanism (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC3). After the DGF was used to fund a few individual regional QA networks, like the APQN, it was suggested by those who manage the DGF that one umbrella organization be created in order to reach a wider audience. The interest in establishing GIQAC, and involving Steering Committee members who could contribute to the oversight of this initiative, was to further support the efforts of the young regional QA networks that already received funding from the DGF, help initiate new regional QA networks, and increase the visibility of these networks to the Steering Committee members who represent different international, regional, and national agencies. The benefit of having the Steering Committee according to the Secretariat, is that “by having a transparent and well-documented process to manage and to implement grants we could attract other donors and continue the initiative (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC3).”

Part of the well-documented process not only involves the self-evaluation and external evaluations necessary as part of the grants given by GIQAC, but also an internal assessment by UNESCO. One UNESCO key informant explained

…we actually evaluate whether we are really getting value for money. We are using the procurement procedures for UNESCO. It’s all quite strict, so we are having to look at each little item…So we evaluate each new project. We do it here at the Secretariat. We present it to the Steering Committee. We revise it, we go back to the networks, they change certain things that are not appropriate, we send it back and then we start the cycle. Because we have some rules for example, the percentage of funds that goes to administrative support, or the…well, a whole range of things that are simply procedure (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC5).
The process to receive funding from GIQAC goes through a rigorous review of several UNESCO offices prior to receiving the Steering Committee’s feedback on the quality of a project proposal. One Steering Committee member commented:

“We’re a Steering Committee meeting, not a Management Committee. Our concern is to try and see that the maximum amount of money actually goes into the activities. Because what these folks tend to do is to load it up with infrastructural money and you have to hire people and do this and do that. Some of that might be quite legitimate…. If you do these things entirely as a consultant coming in, then you are not embedding it, because when the consulting goes, it’s all gone (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC6).

There is an awareness that some basic capacity must exist within the network in order for GIQAC funding to move the regional networks forward. If that basic capacity does not exist, usually another regional QA network, like the APQN, will be sent to help. This Steering Committee member continued “it’s spending as little of GIQAC money as possible (GIQAC.12.07.09.SC6).”

The interview data shows that the common values of GIQAC, UNESCO, World Bank, and INQAAHE are inter-regional cooperation, knowledge-sharing, and building capacity. Although GIQAC is not establishing international norms of QA as assertively as UNESCO, with its sponsored fora or declaration-generating conferences, or as the World Bank, with its prescribed ways of utilizing QA to modernize developing systems of higher education, the GIQAC’s support of regional and inter-regional networks shows an awareness that regional networks increase the sustainability of QA as a norm. The acknowledgement that regional networks are important to international initiatives also shows that the GIQAC perspective on higher education regionalization is more closely as a regional version of internationalization than to higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization.

The interviews of the GIQAC Steering Committee members also illustrate how the GIQAC supports norms of QA through funding QA initiatives that have a robust internal QA component, thus using GIQAC funded projects as models for other regionally oriented QA projects. The focus on efficiency and accountability to improve higher education systems puts the GIQAC firmly in the institutional reformer perspective, which may enable it to create a balance between the World Bank and UNESCO perspectives.
Comparison of International Organizations Involved in QA Capacity Building

As overviewed in the first section of this chapter, the three main international organizations involved in QA capacity building are UNESCO, the World Bank, and INQAAHE. In the first section, profiles of each organization suggested ways in which QA norm-setting has been happening and the values each organization holds that affect the way in which QA practices are promoted. In the second section, key informant interviews of GIQAC Steering Committee members were reviewed to demonstrate the methods whereby GIQAC is shaping QA capacity building through regional QA networks. This final section of the chapter discusses the commonalities among the values and norms of each international organization, relating them to the perspectives of globalization developed in Chapter Two. The chapter concludes by showing how these perspectives fit with the three ideal-types of higher education regionalization. The purpose of this chapter is to sketch out the tendencies of these three international organizations, and GIQAC, to provide a context for understanding how the APQN may be influenced by these international actors.

The internationally normative stance of QA has been established by INQAAHE’s norm entrepreneurs, the World Bank’s significant involvement in higher education capacity building in Asia and the Pacific, and UNESCO’s role in spelling out the international norms of QA through its conventions, declarations, and partner building initiatives. Table 5.2 illustrates the overlapping values and norms of QA from the perspectives of UNESCO, the World Bank, GIQAC and INQAAHE, to show that the international level of QA capacity building is infused by strongly liberal tendencies.

The World Bank has acted as a norm entrepreneur in developing QA along a specific path that assists in the restructuring of higher education systems to make them more efficient and effective, and flexible enough to adapt to the global market economy. Since the El-Khawas et al. (1998) report commissioned by the World Bank for WCHE, the World Bank has supported norms of QA in several higher education projects. The purpose of QA within these projects has been to increase competition in the system, foster innovation, embrace transparency, and encourage free trade. As Robertson (2009) identifies, policy cohesion with other international agencies strengthens the policymaking role of the World Bank. Initiatives like GIQAC, even if it’s temporary, opens up doors
for collaboration, which can deepen the World Bank’s influence in shaping higher education policy worldwide.

**Table 5.2 Mapping International Organization Values, Norms, and Perspectives of Globalization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International Organization</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Norms Related to QA</th>
<th>Perspectives of Globalization</th>
<th>Notions of Higher Education Regionalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>Sensitivity to cultural contexts and diversity, Cooperation, Partnerships</td>
<td>Internal &amp; external QA, objective &amp; transparent QA review, inclusive of stakeholders</td>
<td>Liberal international &amp; Global transformer</td>
<td>Sub-set of globalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>Policy cohesion, Market competition, Innovation, Transparency, Free trade</td>
<td>External &amp; Internal QA, independent QA agency, transparent reporting</td>
<td>Neo-liberal</td>
<td>Sub-set of globalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GIQAC</td>
<td>Inter-regional cooperation, Building capacity, Knowledge sharing</td>
<td>Quality culture, involving many stakeholders</td>
<td>Institutional reformers</td>
<td>Regional version of internationalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INQAAHE</td>
<td>Finding commonality among diversity</td>
<td>Independent QA agency, Internal &amp; External QA review</td>
<td>Institutional reformers</td>
<td>Regional version of internationalization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

UNESCO’s functions as standards-setter and catalyst for cooperation, enabled norms of QA to gain traction on the world stage through activities like the WCHE conference and the QA fora. Partnering with a variety of stakeholders, including other international development organizations, like the World Bank, also played a role in how UNESCO has contributed to the adoption of QA norms throughout the world. Tension exists between UNESCO’s values of respecting cultural diversity and promoting
cooperation, which is why it seems to share liberal internationalists and global transformer perspectives of globalization. Partnering with other international organizations, like UNESCO has done with GIQAC, allows it to assert its values of sensitivity to cultural contexts, and respect for diversity, yet the cooperation goals of UNESCO may undermine the message of protecting cultural diversity. UNESCO’s stated norms of QA show a clear alignment to global market competition. UNESCO’s partnership with the World Bank, and the QA norms it supports, may align UNESCO with other international organizations at the expense of cultivating distinctly regional notions of quality in higher education.

The World Bank and UNESCO highlight the distinctions between neo-liberal and liberal international perspectives of globalization. The World Bank’s neo-liberal perspectives highlight higher education policies that focus on global competition and integrating policy towards the global market. UNESCO’s liberal international perspectives highlight the promotion of a global citizenship, with a respect for other forms of identity (regional, national, or local). Although both organizations come from different positions of globalization, both favor the international level of coordinating and organizing QA policies, which emphasized higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization.

Over the past 20 years, INQAAHE has provided a space for national QA norm entrepreneurs to share experiences and foster the life cycle of QA norms. Unlike UNESCO and World Bank, INQAAHE’s capacity to introduce QA norms and educational change at the national level is dependent on the abilities of its members and their roles at the national, regional, and international levels of QA policy and practice. INQAAHE follows an institutional reformer perspective of globalization emphasizing multi-lateral policy coordination. Based on INQAAHE’s limited funds, it has had to rely more on its individual members to generate projects and initiatives that have international and inter-regional impact. As such, INQAAHE relies on its relationships with the regional QA networks to have a larger footprint on the international discussions of QA. In order to foster inter-regional collaboration, a strong emphasis on regional identity would be necessary to recognize the importance of each network.
As the key informant interviews demonstrate, the GIQAC recognizes there is a certain level of quality that all developing countries need to reach in order to not be left behind in the global market economy. The regional networks can assist developing countries learn about and implement QA practices through informal and formal mentoring within the network as well as through information sharing with other regional QA networks. The interviews acknowledged the important role of national QA leaders to foster regional QA capacity building projects and workshops, which demonstrates the critical role the national level plays in the regionalization of QA. Thus, the GIQAC key informants value inter-regional cooperation and knowledge sharing, similar to INQAAHE, showing an institutional reformer perspective of globalization. There is an assumption within the GIQAC that regional QA networks have defined their regional particularities, even if this definition is not realized within the networks. Nonetheless, GIQAC fits better within the ideal-type of higher education regionalization as a regional form of internationalization with its recognition of policy coordination at national and regional levels and its assumption of regional identity already being firmly established among the regional QA networks.

The World Bank and UNESCO appear to have a top-down approach to higher education regionalization, placing it as a sub-set of globalization. The approaches of INQAAHE and GIQAC to regional QA capacity building may soften the top-down nature of higher education regionalization, but it is too early to tell if these smaller, less well-funded organizations will make a difference in how higher education regionalization plays out in regional QA projects like the APQN. Nonetheless, both INQAAHE and GIQAC’s perspectives of higher education regionalization as a regional form of internationalization, sit as “agents of” globalization.

In this chapter, the role of international QA actors and activities provides a context for reflecting on the APQN and the Vietnamese embedded case study, but more importantly it demonstrates that international actors have played an important role in the progress of the APQN’s development. As Chapter Six will show, international actors seem like by-standers within the APQN; however, the other activities being carried out by World Bank, UNESCO, and INQAAHE in the countries of APQN members, clearly exert considerable influence on the APQN’s members.
This chapter illustrates the international-to-regional dimension of international actors’ perceptions of regional QA networks, and the APQN’s abilities. Chapters Six and Seven will suggest that the APQN’s attraction for national membership is its ability to share regional perspectives at international discussions (regional-to-international). This chapter shows that international actors fund APQN and other regional QA network initiatives because of their capacity to reach national members, suggesting an international-to-regional-to-national trend. On the spectrum of higher education regionalization, Chapters Six and Seven will show that the influence of international actors on national APQN members, offers strong evidence that the APQN is following a form of higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization.
Chapter Six: APQN Activities

To enhance the quality of higher education in Asia and the Pacific region through strengthening the work of quality assurance agencies and extending the cooperation between them.

APQN Mission Statement (APQN, 2011).

This chapter focuses on the APQN’s activities and events in order to understand the ideal-type of higher education regionalization that it exhibits. This chapter will show how the APQN’s mission is operationalized.

The chapter starts out with a history of higher education in Asia and the Pacific. The purpose of this first section is to provide context for the activities of the APQN. The majority of the chapter will focus on the APQN; its history, structure, activities, members, and capacity building activities. The data examined in this chapter includes analysis of its membership, governance, events, and activities such as its online training courses, manuals, and website. Details from my participant observation at its 2009 and 2010 annual conferences will also be given. The conclusion will present how the textual analysis and participation observation shed light on how the APQN is enacting higher education regionalization. The following chapter, Chapter Seven, will complete the picture by discussing the APQN actors; analyzing data gathered from key informant interviews and an online survey conducted of the APQN online mailing list.

The History of Higher Education in Asia

The history of higher education in Asia reaches well beyond the modern industrialized nation states of the twentieth century or the colonial legacies of the nineteenth century. China, India, and Pakistan are a few examples of countries with established higher education institutions that were developed hundreds to thousands of years ago. The Chinese imperial university influenced the early development of higher education in Việt Nam and Korea with the focus on passing the civil service examinations, based on knowledge of the Confucian classical texts. In India and Pakistan,
Buddhist centers of learning, such as Nalanda in India and Taxila in Pakistan offered training for medicine, law, and military science.

Most of the evidence of Western higher education systems taking root can be seen during the nineteenth century when European powers had colonized several countries of Asia and the Pacific; however, there is history of colonial universities in the region as far back as St. Paul’s university established in Macao by Portuguese Jesuits in 1594. The British colonies\(^8\) were deeply connected to the University of London’s distance education program since it began in 1861 (Ashby, 1966). The French colonies\(^9\) developed polytechnic institutions later in their colonial history, because, as in Việt Nam, the French left the educational systems in the colonies relatively alone until the early twentieth century (Hac, 1995). Likewise, the Dutch and Portuguese did not pay much attention to higher education in their colonies (Altbach, 1989, p. 23).

The development of higher education in those countries that were not colonized was for the purpose of protecting themselves against colonization. For Japan, in order to avoid colonization, during the Meiji era (1868 – 1912) experts were invited from the US, Germany, and France to develop the modern Japanese university, which mainly followed the German model (Nakayama, 1989; Narita, 1978). For Thailand, King Rama V observed through trade with various colonies in the region (mainly British) that higher education was necessary for the development of a modern government (Sinlarat, 2004, p. 204).

Most of the countries of Asia, by the middle of the twentieth century, had a modern system of higher education; however, there was great variation in the level of quality, enrollment, and equity. In the Pacific, small island nations were slower to implement a modern higher education system, relying heavily on larger nearby countries, like Australia and New Zealand to provide post-secondary education for an elite portion of the population. Small island states in the Pacific, which sits on the far periphery of the world economic and political system, face many challenges in higher education.

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\(^8\) British colonies in Asia consisted of: Australia, Brunei, Hong Kong, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Solomon Islands, and Western Samoa.

\(^9\) French colonies in Asia consisted of: Cambodia, Laos, and Viet Nam.
The History of Higher Education in the Pacific

This history of higher education in the Pacific extends back thousands of years to the indigenous ways of knowing of the people of Oceania (Thaman, 2000, 2003). The history of higher education, in western terms, began during British, Spanish, French, and American colonialism. Until recently, higher education institutions did not acknowledge the indigenous ways of knowing that had sustained the people of Oceania for thousands of years before colonization (Brady, 1997).

One of the first types of modern higher education institutions were the theological schools established throughout the Pacific islands meant to train pastors and missionary teachers (Baba, 1997). In the 1920s, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, a medical school was established to serve English-speaking island states. After the Second World War, teacher colleges were established along national agendas, while agricultural colleges followed a regional model, similar to medical colleges (Baba, 1997). The development of higher education within these particular fields was possible because there was no threat to the colonial power (Baba, Crocombe, & Meleisea, 1988, p. 21).

Those who wished to received advanced degrees either went to Australia, New Zealand or the United States. In 1968, the University of the South Pacific (USP) was founded by a royal charter signed by Queen Elizabeth II to serve the region’s needs (Baba, 1997). USP considers itself one of two regional universities in the world and serves twelve small island states (Pacific, 2011).

Many of the values of the Oceania cultures embrace redistribution, reciprocity and inclusion (Coxon & Munce, 2008). These values have directed the development of USP extension programs and other higher education institutions in the region to better serve national needs (Baba, 1997). Eventually newly independent small island states began to establish their own national universities, which is still a trend today.

The Economic Status of the Region

When examining the economic status of the 53 countries that make up the Asia Pacific region, half of the countries/territories in the region are middle income countries. Building capacity in QA, particularly for lower-middle income countries, helps link post-
secondary education with workforce preparation, according to the World Bank’s *Learning for All* strategy.

A general picture of the economic status of the region and the countries/territories represented by APQN member organizations can be gained by using The World Bank’s (2011) *Gross National Income Per Capita* lists, and supplementing it with the United Nations’ (2011) *Gross National Income Per Capita* lists when data didn’t exist for certain countries/territories. Categorizing with the countries by the World Bank’s delineation of high income (more than $11,906), upper middle income (between $3,856-$11,905), lower middle income (between $976-$3,855) and low income (less than $976), table 6.1 compares the economic status of the 53 countries/territories in Asia and the Pacific to the economic status of the APQN member organizations. Table 6.1 shows that the APQN members are not quite representative of the region, but the growth in member organizations is reflecting the general population of the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Income</th>
<th>Upper-Middle Income</th>
<th>Lower-Middle Income</th>
<th>Low Income</th>
<th>Unknown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asia Pacific</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**History of the APQN**

The history of the APQN can be characterized as riding the wave of QA as a norm just as this wave started to cascade. The APQN has steadily surfed this wave, gathering new members through its norm-setting activities. In 2001, the APQN began from a discussion of a few Asia Pacific members of INQAAHE at its biennial meeting. A steering committee was formed by the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation and met in January 2003 to establish the network. A few months later, in May 2003, Marjorie Peace Lenn (2004) submitted a recommendation to the World Bank that a regional network of QA capacity building be formed. This proposal was read by higher education specialists at the World Bank, who then wrote an application to the DGF for funding (World Bank, 2007a).
In the meantime, a funding proposal was sent to the Australian government by David Woodhouse, to establish the APQN secretariat at the Australian University Quality Assurance Agency (AUQA). A year later at the following biennial INQAAHE conference in Oman, in April 2004, the APQN constitution was drafted. In August 2004, funding was approved by the Australian government, and the Secretariat was established. A few months later in October 2004, the DGF funding began. At the end of the year, on December 1, 2004, the APQN was legally registered as an international non-profit. The first meeting of the APQN followed shortly after in January 2005 in Hong Kong with 27 participants.

The first year for the APQN Secretariat was a flurry of activity mainly focused on identifying and/or setting up training opportunities in the region for APQN members and sending members and trainers to these meetings. Members were able to meet at three separate conferences (APQN, 2005a). There were also several training workshops in Cambodia, Philippines, Australia and Mongolia that APQN-sponsored participants attended. Also, one consultant from in the Philippines was sponsored by the APQN to support QA capacity building in Cambodia (APQN, 2005a).

In 2006, a similar pattern of activity continued, with the APQN funding members from low-income countries to participate in training activities or conferences, and sponsoring capacity building workshops and consulting activities. The first official Annual General Meeting was hosted by the Shanghai Evaluation of Education Institute (SEEI) in Shanghai, China with 100 participants. There were four training activities and conferences that APQN members attended (see Appendix I).

In 2007, the APQN’s third year, project-based activities and an online component to its activities were introduced. The introduction of project-based activities, as low-cost, tightly time framed projects, was an important development to prepare for the end of DGF funding in December 2007. An online course on external QA was jointly sponsored with UNESCO-IIEP and had 60 students. A Toolkit for Regulating Cross-Border Higher Education was sponsored with UNESCO-Bangkok. Instead of individual consultancies between APQN countries, an internship was initiated. Based on institutional interest in membership, the constitution was amended to allow for institutional membership.
Another important development for the APQN during this year was a hand-out on the APQN activities in Chinese, given at a roundtable discussion on QA in Shanghai.

In 2008, the APQN began to participate in world and regional discussions of QA. Inspired by work done on the Brisbane Communiqué, a session was held at the Annual Meeting in Chiba, Japan in February to come up with an Asia Pacific version, called the Chiba Principles. A month later, the APQN learned of GIQAC’s approval for four of its proposed projects, totaling $100,000 USD. Board members represented the APQN at a few international and regional meetings (see Table 6.2). Another online forum was sponsored by the APQN. At the end of the year, SEEI from China was selected as the new secretariat for the APQN.

In 2009, recognition of the APQN within international circles continued. At the beginning of the year, GIQAC paid for the APQN secretariat to assist ANQAHE to set up an office infrastructure and to provide some training on website development management. Also in January, the APQN sent a representative to the Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO) meetings at the OECD in Paris. Board members continued to represent the APQN at international meetings, such as the WCHE2 sponsored by UNESCO in Paris in July. At this meeting an MOU was signed with INQAAHE and meetings were held with the GIQAC Steering Committee and other regional QA networks.

In 2010, the APQN saw tremendous growth in its membership and established itself as a leader among the GIQAC recipients. By the end of 2010, membership numbers had reached 80 representing 33 countries. Two evaluations by UNESCO and the World Bank spoke favorably of the APQN; the first was the evaluation mission of the APQN by UNESCO, and the second was of web-based activities of GIQAC recipients conducted by the World Bank. Both reports stated that the APQN was a model for other regional and international QA networks to follow (APQN, 2010c). GIQAC projects continued, with a new project focused on mutual recognition.

Membership Types and Fees

During the first few years, several changes were made to the APQN constitution to meet potential members’ needs. Some of these changes are evident in the membership
structure and fees. There are five types of membership designation for organizations who wish to become members of the APQN: 1) full, 2) intermediate, 3) associate, 4) institutional, and 5) observer. In order to be on the Board, representatives must be from member organizations with full or intermediate membership status. Full and intermediate membership status is dependent on how many criteria the organization fulfills; there are eight criteria in total. The criteria for membership (see Appendix K) were inspired by ENQA’s membership criteria (APQN, 2005a). In order to be a full member, organizations must meet all of the criteria; to be an intermediate member, organizations must meet two criteria. The two criteria intermediate and full members both meet are: 1) provide documentation that demonstrates the agency is responsible for programmatic and institutional level QA and 2) present the mission statement and objectives of the organization to demonstrate consistency with the nature of the organization (APQN, 2011a).

Only full and intermediate members have the ability to vote. To be an associate member, an institutional member, or an observer, organizations must demonstrate an active interest in QA. Before the institutional membership status was created, organizations from higher education institutions were considered associate members. The designation of institutional member status allows the APQN to understand the percentage of higher education institutions who sit on the General Council, which has representatives from each membership type.

Examining the membership structure and fees of INQAAHE can provide a point of comparison for the APQN membership structure and fees. INQAAHE has three types of membership and it does not distinguish between institutional and associate members, as the APQN does. INQAAHE fees are higher than the APQN fees and are dependent on the socio-economic status of the country/territory of the member organization. INQAAHE’s lower annual fee, for organizations from lower middle and lower income countries/territories, is on par with the APQN’s annual fee for full and intermediate members. There are no initial fees for INQAAHE membership as there are for new APQN members.

INQAAHE full members have a few more privileges than APQN full members. Full members in INQAAHE can call an extraordinary general meeting with 10% of the
full members, and full members are more likely to be on the Board, because of the Constitution’s requirement that at least two thirds of the Board be full members. The APQN constitution treats full and intermediate members equally.

Although the criteria for membership in both constitutions are very similar, the APQN website offers a clearer picture of the necessary application materials than the INQAAHE website. Clarity in the application process is particularly important for member organizations that have to translate their documents into English.

The fees for APQN membership include an initial fee of $500 USD (except for the observers, who do not have to pay an initial fee), and an annual fee depending on membership type. Full and intermediate members pay a $300 USD annual membership fee or $285 USD, if they are INQAAHE members. Associate and institutional members pay a $200 USD annual membership fee, and observers pay a $150 USD annual fee. There is no discount for associate, institutional or observers who are also members of INQAAHE. With the fees that it collects from the current members, the APQN could sustain itself in a minimal way. Until this year, the membership fees were not enough to provide sustainability.

**APQN Membership Development**

The APQN has experienced a substantial amount of growth since it began in 2005. Starting in 2005 with 17 members from 10 countries, the APQN has expanded to 80 members from 33 countries, and five observers from three countries outside the region. As seen in Figure 6.1, membership has expanded not only in the number of members, but also in the number of countries represented. Only eight members have discontinued their membership with the APQN, and three of those members re-joined a few years later under a different organizational name or membership status. Several member organizations have changed names since they joined. Although the increase in membership and diversity is remarkable, there is still plenty of opportunity for expansion of the network given that the region includes 53 countries.
The increase in membership from members representing 11 countries to 33 countries in the past six years shows that the APQN is becoming more visible in Asia and the Pacific; however, increasing membership fees will be important for the APQN to become financially sustainable. In the APQN conferences I attended, Board members mentioned that non-member participants are encouraged to join, but the benefits of membership and the membership process was not clearly articulated, either in the presentations about the APQN or in literature handed out with the Conference Schedule. In 2010 a key informant told me the Board wishes to conduct a membership drive, but evidence of such a drive is difficult to see (APQN.03.15.10Member12). More could be done to market the contributions that the APQN is making to its member institutions, which may encourage more universities and QA agencies in the region to join. Table 6.2 lists all the current members of APQN.

Figure 6.1. APQN membership growth 2005-2010
### Table 6.2 Members of APQN by Country/Territory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
<th>Country/Territory</th>
<th>Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australian Qualifications Framework Council (AQFC), DFEEST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>National ELT Accreditation Scheme Ltd (NEAS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN &amp; INQAAHE</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)¹⁰</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INQAAHE</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)¹¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>American International University-Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>University Grants Commission of Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Brunei Darussalam</td>
<td>Brunei Darussalam National Accreditation Council (BDNAC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Accreditation Committee of Cambodia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>International University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Yunnan Higher Education Evaluation Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN &amp; INQAAHE</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Shanghai Education Evaluation Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INQAAHE</td>
<td>Chinese Taipei</td>
<td>Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INQAAHE</td>
<td>Chinese Taipei</td>
<td>Council of Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN &amp; INQAAHE</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>Secretariat for the Pacific Board for Educational Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INQAAHE</td>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>University of the South Pacific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN &amp; INQAAHE</td>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>ASIIN e.V.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹⁰ Recently AUQA was merged with TEQSA.

¹¹ TEQSA has not been a member of APQN, but recently it merged with AUQA.
<p>| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | Hong Kong, China | Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) |
| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | Hong Kong, China | Joint Quality Review Committee Limited |
| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | Hong Kong, China | The Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions |
| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | Hong Kong, China | University Grants Committee |
| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | India | Dhanwate National College |
| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | India | Govt. College of education, M.A.Road, Srinagar, J&amp;K |
| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | India | National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) |
| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | Indonesia | Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi (BAN-PT) |
| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | Iran | The University of Tehran |
| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | Japan | Japan University Accreditation Association (JUAA) |
| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | Japan | National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation (NIAD-UE) |
| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | Kazakhstan | Independent Kazakhstan Quality Assurance Agency in Education |
| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | Kazakhstan | National Accreditation Centre of the Republic of Kazakhstan |
| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | Korea, South | Korean Council for University College Education (KCCE) |
| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | Korea, South | Korean Council for University Education |
| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | Kuwait | Private Universities Council |
| APQN &amp; INQAAHE | Laos | Department of Higher Education Ministry of |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APQN</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>University/Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Macau</td>
<td>Macau University of Science and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Asian Institute of Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN &amp; INQAAHE</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>Malaysian Qualifications Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN &amp; INQAAHE</td>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>Maldives Qualifications Authority (MQA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>Health Sciences University of Mongolia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>Ikh Zasag University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>University of the Humanities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN &amp; INQAAHE</td>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>Mongolian National Council for Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INQAAHE</td>
<td></td>
<td>Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>University Grants Commission of Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN &amp; INQAAHE</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>New Zealand Qualifications Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INQAAHE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN &amp; INQAAHE</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>New Zealand Universities Academic Audit Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Air university Islamabad Pakistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Allama Iqbal Open University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Beaconhouse National University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Frontier Women University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Institute of Business Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Institute of Management Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Institute of Quality &amp; Technology Management, Punjab University, Lahore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Agricultural University Peshawar-Pakistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Mehran University of Engineering &amp; Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>National Accreditation Council for Teacher Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>National Textile University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>NED University of Engineering &amp; Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Quality Assurance Directorate</td>
</tr>
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<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Riphah International University (RIU)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Sukkur Institute of Business Administration</td>
</tr>
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<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>The University of Faisalabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>University of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>University of Karachi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>University of Management and Technology (UMT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Ziauddin University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN &amp;</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Fatima Jinnah Women University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INQAAHE</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Higher Education Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INQAAHE</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INQAAHE</td>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>Quality Enhancement Cell, Kohat University of Science &amp; Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>International Distance Education Accreditation League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN &amp;</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Accrediting Agency of Chartered Colleges and Universities in the Philippines (AACCUP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INQAAHE</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN &amp;</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>National Center of Public Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INQAAHE</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>The Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN &amp;</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>The National Accreditation Agency (NAA) of the Russian Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APQN &amp;</td>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>Samoa Qualifications Authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Currently the majority of member organizations are from low income countries/territories. Figure 6.2 shows membership growth by the socio-economic status of the country and demonstrates that there are more members from lower middle income and low income countries/territories than from high income and upper middle income countries/territories. Although when it started in 2004, the APQN had a majority of high income countries/territories, the majority of member organizations very quickly changed
to lower middle income and low income countries/territories. There are a variety of reasons for this growth in member organizations from low income and lower middle income countries/territories, but the most obvious is that it reflects the regional distribution. Another reason shared by a key informant is the push by national QA agencies and governments for higher education institutions to become APQN members as appears to be the case with higher education institutions from Pakistan (see Table 6.2 for list of APQN members). None of the key informants mentioned that membership in APQN was mandated by their external funding agreements, but there is certainly evidence that funding by international development organizations introduced the APQN’s QA activities to low income and low-middle income countries.

![Figure 6.2. APQN membership growth by socio-economic status, 2005-2010.](image)

The number of APQN members should represent the region, and as Table 6.1 showed previously, the overall total of APQN membership based on the socio-economic status of its member countries/territories is becoming closer to reflecting the general population of the region.

Another reason for why membership may be growing from countries/territories with low income and lower middle income status may be related to the international development funding for QA in higher education initiatives, such as funding from the
World Bank and UNESCO. Many of the countries with World Bank projects have organizations who are members of the APQN.

Besides international development initiatives related to QA, growing regional integration and cooperation, as seen with other organizations like SEAMEO or ASEAN, QA organizations from low and lower middle income countries/territories recognize the APQN as a point of reference in building these regional ties.

Member Partnership

Cooperation is a key value of the APQN, as stated in its mission statement. One way to fulfill the APQN’s mission is in the signing of memoranda of understanding (MOU) and/or memoranda of cooperation (MOC). Each APQN Annual Report, except for the 2010 report, lists new partnerships that have developed during that year. From 2004 – 2009, 11 MOCs or MOUs have been signed between 10 countries (see Appendix L for the chronological development of partnerships).

Although not that many MOUs or MOCs have been signed over the past seven years, a few patterns can be seen. More mature QA agencies are making these agreements than less mature QA agencies. The most MOUs are being signed with SEEI from China, AUQA from Australia, and Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation from Hong Kong. Member organizations from Commonwealth countries tend to connect with each other, such as those from Australia, New Zealand, India, and Hong Kong and the UK. MOUs and MOCs pave the way for future mutual understanding and mutual recognition initiatives. As further regional integration occurs, more MOUs and MOCs may be signed within the APQN. These activities also build trust within the network.

Governance Structure

The governance of the APQN consists of a Board and a General Council. As mentioned in the membership section, the Board is made up of full and intermediate members, and unlike the INQAAHE Board, it does not have to have a quota of representatives from either type of membership. The General Council oversees the Board and the financial and business matters of the APQN.
The Board has seven elected members, and can have up to eleven members, depending on how many have been co-opted. The elected members include the President, Vice-President, Secretary, and four other elected members. Elected positions are for two-years with the possibility of being re-elected three times. No two elected Board members can be from the same organization. The Board appoints Project Leaders, who typically come from the Board; however, if a Project Leader is not a Board member, they can be co-opted onto the Board.

The Board is mostly made up of representatives from full member organizations. An overview of the Board members from 2005-present, shows that more than 75% of the Board members have come from full member organizations (see Appendix J). Leadership positions on the Board have been representatives from only full member organizations (see Appendix J). Board leadership, with the exception of SEEI, has been made up of the original founding members. The Board leaders have been from Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, and the Philippines. AUQA, from Australia, has had representation on the Board for all seven years.

Since the founding of the APQN, 24 individuals representing 17 organizations in 15 countries have been on the Board. Half of these individuals are from founding member organizations. There have been 10 women and 14 men who have served on the Board during this time, which is comparable to the Board leadership as well, although the Board President has been a woman for five out of seven years. Six of the Board members have been from countries where there are current World Bank projects (India, Indonesia, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). Although the Board has a larger percentage of men over women throughout its seven year history, the elected positions have been closer to 50/50 representation. Of the Board leaders, over half have received their education outside of the country/territory in which they are currently working (see Appendix J).

**Representation at international conferences.**

Since 2007, APQN Board members have participated in international conferences on behalf of the APQN. As the GIQAC Steering Committee members acknowledged, the APQN is made up of QA professionals who are not just seen as experts within their own country and region, but also as international experts. This international credibility allows
the APQN leadership to represent the Asia Pacific region at conferences, meetings, and expert discussions.

**Table 6.3 APQN Representation at International Conferences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Representative</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 2007</td>
<td>APQN President</td>
<td>Toronto, Canada</td>
<td>INQAAHE Biennial Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2008</td>
<td>APQN President</td>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>UNESCO Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2009</td>
<td>APQN President &amp; Board Member</td>
<td>KL, Malaysia</td>
<td>ASEAN Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2008</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Macao, China</td>
<td>UNESCO Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2008</td>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Paris, France</td>
<td>ENQA Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2009</td>
<td>APQN President &amp; Vice-President</td>
<td>UNESCO, Paris, France</td>
<td>WCHE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2009</td>
<td>Board Member</td>
<td>Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia</td>
<td>Observatory on Borderless Higher Education Cross-Border Higher Education Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2009</td>
<td>APQN President</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>4th EU-Asia Higher Education Platform Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2010</td>
<td>Vice-President</td>
<td>Paris, France</td>
<td>OECD Stakeholders Consultative Group of the AHELO Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2011</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>Bonn, Germany</td>
<td>Asia Europe Meeting Expert Seminar on Regional Quality Assurance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APQN Events**

An APQN event is where members and non-members gather to attend its annual conference, annual general meeting, and/or a sponsored-workshop. As a regional network, APQN events have been hosted in a variety of countries throughout Asia and the Pacific, but mostly in Asia. Table 6.4 lists the location of the events and the number of participants. Funding participants from developing countries to attend conferences and workshops was a large part of the first DGF. The annual conferences will draw the greatest diversity of countries and organizations, whereas the workshops typically focus on a national agenda, with joint national sponsors (usually members), such as AUQA,
and have a few out-of-country participants, whose participation may be funded by the APQN.

**Annual conferences.**

The annual conferences show that the heart of the APQN annual conferences is on capacity building to meet international norms of QA and it is not on its regional identity. The annual conferences have grown in size each year, except for the Chiba conference. Most of the conferences have taken place in East or Southeast Asia, with the exception of the 2011 conference in India, sponsored by NAAC. The 2012 conference will return to Southeast Asia and will be held in Cambodia. Southeast Asia is centrally located for the region, which may be why many of the conferences are held in this sub-region.

Each year the Board of Directors sends a call out to the membership for proposals to host the next year’s conference. The theme of the conference is proposed by the hosts. With the conference in Việt Nam being the exception, all of the conferences have been sponsored by a Board member’s organization, or directly after the conference a Board member from the hosting organization is selected or seconded on the Board as was the case with SEEI from China and Office for National Educational Standards and Quality Assessment from Thailand.

The titles of the conferences suggest an awareness of the diverse tensions placed on QA agencies in the region; national and international aspirations, cooperation and diversity, the need for capacity building, mutual understanding, and sharing challenges and practices of QA. Based on my observation of the 2009 and 2010 conferences, which Table 6.2 confirms, the main contribution these conferences make to QA capacity building in the region is the ability for QA agencies, higher education institutions, and ministry of education officials *from the host country* to showcase their QA policies and practices, but also to learn from regional and international participants through presentations, workshops, and conference networking.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title of Conference</th>
<th>Host &amp; Location</th>
<th>Total Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-4 March 2006</td>
<td>Regional Mobility: Cooperation in Quality Assurance</td>
<td>SEEI, Shanghai, China</td>
<td>100; 20 from China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-7 February 2007</td>
<td>Emerging Challenges: Emerging Practices</td>
<td>Malaysian Quality Authority, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 March 2009</td>
<td>Balancing the National Contexts and International Aspirations</td>
<td>General Department of Education Testing and Accreditation, Hanoi, Việt Nam</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 March 2010</td>
<td>Enhancing Quality of Higher Education in the Developing World</td>
<td>Bangkok, Thailand</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4 March 2011</td>
<td>Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Expectations and Achievements</td>
<td>NAAC, Bangalore, India</td>
<td>300+ from 35 countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>External Quality Assurance in the Asia-Pacific: What has Changed over a Decade?</td>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>Not available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not only does the host country benefit from the opportunity to showcase the host countries QA policies and practices to an international and regional audience, but the APQN conference also offers professional development opportunities for host country participants, who may not otherwise be able to participate in regional or international conferences, to present at an international conference.

It is not clear if the host country participants, many of whom come from non-member organizations, benefit from the APQN Conferences. Many of the Vietnamese participants I spoke to in 2009 were challenged with understanding the QA policies and
practices in Việt Nam. The higher education institutional representatives, particularly, felt the accountability mechanisms imposed by MOET were unrealistic and overbearing.

I am unable to report a similar trend in the Thai hosted conference, not because these sentiments don’t exist, but because I did not interact with as many host country participants. During meal times the Thai delegates were segregated from the international participants into a separate room, so the conference breaks also naturally segregated into host country and non-host country social groups.

At both conferences, I observed that more men than women asked questions or made comments. Although participation in the events were approximately 45% female and 55% male, which correlates to the general trend of men and women enrolled in tertiary education in Asia and the Pacific (UIS, 2009). Approximately half of those who stood to ask questions during the question and answer sessions were from Commonwealth countries.

The gender ratio of the participants and presenters is remarkably equitable. A head count of participants conducted at each conference activity demonstrates a nearly 50/50 representation, which is consistent with the mailing list and the responses to the survey on the APQN’s contributions to the region.

At the two conferences I participated in, the host country participants did not take advantage of the question and answer sessions at the end of most keynote, plenary or break-out sessions, however. Most of the questions were asked by international or regional participants with the ratio of male and female questioners being three to two.

To date, there have been seven annual conferences of the APQN. All of the conferences have been open to non-members, but the annual general meeting (AGM) is held for members only. I observed two of the AGMs in Việt Nam and in Thailand.

**Annual general meeting.**

At both AGMs the Board leaders sat in a panel in front of the General Council (the members). The communication during the meetings was between the Board and the members. There was very little discussion offered between the members. The quality of the meetings seemed similar to teachers at the front of the classroom with students watching them and sharing their opinions through the teachers, but not with each other.
In Việt Nam, the 2009 AGM was held at the end of the first day of the conference. Besides the required committee reports regarding the budget and the past year’s activities, the membership discussed and voted on a new fee structure. There was little discussion on the change in membership fees. There was a question about why INQAAHE members receive a discount on their membership and a Board member explained that it was part of their memorandum of understanding with INQAAHE, who would like to encourage its members to join regional networks. The liveliest discussion in the meeting was between the Board members regarding the practice of anonymous voting. One of the Board members worried that the method of casting ballots was not anonymous enough. The change in membership fees passed with an overwhelming majority.

In Thailand, the 2010 AGM was held on the last day, after a series of members-only events, including a plenary talk given by the Secretary General of ASEAN, Dr. Surin Pitsuwan. The talk by Dr. Pitsuwan was quite popular, which boosted participation in the AGM.

After the required business reports, the meeting opened up for discussion of participants to share their ideas about the strategic plan. Only two members, one being an observer, stood up to offer comments. The first member who stood up was also part of the AUN and asked for the Board to consider letting the AUN be a sub-group within the APQN. Along with this request, the member cited several international bodies that have provided useful QA capacity building (INQAAHE, UNESCO, and OECD) and asserted that the APQN needs to stand out from these organizations and offer something unique. He recommended that the APQN consider its role as bringing together the three main actors in higher education—government, “providers” (higher education institutions), and QA agencies, to play a leading role in providing a platform for discussion. He also suggested that the APQN considering becoming a regional accreditor for QA agencies.

A Board member responded by reminding the membership that the Chiba Principles, as well as the INQAAHE (2007) Guidelines of Good Practices in Quality Assurance (GGP), can and should be used for members to self-evaluate. This Board member asked “Have we reached the stage to look at our own quality?” She gave two examples of Chile and Australia where they have conducted these types of activities in
relation to INQAAHE’s GGP. The observer who spoke during the meeting agreed with the member’s suggestions and recommended that the APQN membership ask “who is serving whom?” This question relates to the larger philosophical issues that Skolnik (2010) identifies in his article about the political dimensions of QA. Some of the members represent higher education institutions, but most of them represent QA agencies. Many of the QA agency members sit within the ministry of education, although these QA agencies are not represented on the Board. In order for the APQN to provide a larger role in the region, it would need to reconcile these differences between its members.

Although the Chiba Principles assert the autonomy of QA agencies, the realities of QA agencies in the region, specifically low income and low-middle income countries, small Pacific island states, and Confucian heritage, are that the state plays an influential role in the development and maintenance of QA agencies. This reality of the membership does not mean that the APQN stresses the central control of the state on QA policymaking and practices, but the networking that goes on within the APQN may unintentionally reinforce the practice of the state being central to the QA process, based on the practices of its members.

**Workshops.**

The workshops have been a central part of the APQN’s capacity building operations. Initially the APQN would sponsor between five to ten participants to attend a workshop organized by another member organization such as AUQA or NAAC. Country-specific workshops were also conducted where a handful of participants from neighboring countries/territories would be sponsored to attend (see Appendix I for a timeline of sponsored workshops, locations, and number of participants). Workshops are typically conducted by APQN Board members, or by those member organizations that are represented on the Board. Since the DGF funding has been decreased in size, the APQN has been sponsoring online workshops and fora for member organizations instead.
Online training courses and fora.

There have been two online training courses and three online fora sponsored by the APQN with other partners. The online training courses were conducted in collaboration with UNESCO-IIEP. The first APQN online forum was a follow-up activity from the first UNESCO-IIEP training course. The last two have been based on membership feedback. The online training course and online fora are moderated by an international QA expert, with a few modules given by other regional or international QA experts, some of whom are from APQN member organizations. McNeely and Cha (1994) argue that international organizations play an institutionalizing force in educational convergence and change, of which this training module is an example.

Online training courses.

Online course materials offer APQN members and non-members an opportunity to learn from other mature and immature QA systems as well as to understand the international and regional norms of QA. The UNESCO-IIEP course modules can be downloaded for free on its website. The first training course was piloted in April 2007 and after an evaluation of the project, a second course was offered in 2010 with five course modules (UNESCO-IIEP, 2007a, 2007b, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2010d, 2010e). The 2010 course was targeted towards the development of QA in Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Southeastern European countries. The course modules identified QA stakeholders, for which the modules are written as: governing bodies, QA agencies, higher education institutions, and professional bodies. The five course modules are titled: 1) Making basic choices for quality assurance systems, 2) Conducting the process of external quality assurance, 3) Setting up and developing the quality assurance agency, 4) Understanding and assessing quality, and 5) Regulating and assuring the quality of cross-border providers of higher education.

A policy discourse analysis of the 2010 online course modules reveals six distinct themes that cut across all of the five modules: 1) challenges of globalization on higher education systems (mainly related to global competition) and the role QA plays in

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12 Open coding for themes was conducted by using Nvivo. Initially 32 codes were identified, and then reduced to these six, based on organizing and comparing the codes to each other. See Appendix A.
mitigating these problems, 2) why QA is important for national systems of higher education, 3) aligning definitions of quality and the objectives for QA to the national context, 4) institutional responsibilities in the QA process, 5) definitions, instruments, and functions of QA agencies, and 6) debates about QA. Within these themes of the UNESCO-IIEP course modules, written and promoted by APQN members, a roadmap is given to newly developing QA agencies on how to follow international norms of QA.

Challenges of globalization and the role QA plays in mitigating problems.

Globalization is seen in economic terms, not political or cultural, throughout the course module. The economic definition of globalization emphasizes neo-liberal assumptions of the market playing the dominant role in how higher education institutions should manage quality, similar to the World Bank practices. Even though this course module is developed by a UN agency, the liberal internationalist assumptions that higher education is a way to educate global citizens is not as emphasized in this course. In these course modules, the balance between the notions of globalization as integrating society or as integrating the market leans slightly more towards integrating the market.

Although globalization is not a main theme throughout the course modules, the entirety of the course assumes that the best approach to globalization is to understand how others in the world system have taken up QA policies and practices, thus offering a pre-fabricated QA framework that can be customized to national contexts. The online modules frame the challenges of globalization in the context of the marketization of higher education, particularly in the new phenomenon of transnational activities such as cross-border higher education. The internationalization of higher education, as evidenced by the increased flows of international students, is presented as one rationale for why sound QA systems are necessary. QA is portrayed as playing an important role in mitigating challenges with the increased movement of students and expanded provision of cross-border higher education.

The modules describe several examples of how countries from a variety of economic, political and cultural backgrounds are implementing QA to demonstrate the diversity of the QA process. Although diversity is highlighted in the modules, QA is presented as a technical process that all higher education systems must follow. The political nature of QA is not addressed. It is noted in the first module that stakeholders
can use QA for their own interests, but it does not delve further into how QA promotes certain stakeholders interests over others and how it can be avoided.

Why QA is important to national systems of higher education.

In line with the economic globalization argument, the development of national higher education systems demands a QA component because national expansion of higher education has increased the diversity of public and private providers, including online learning. Therefore, with expansion and greater diversity of providers in the system, mechanisms for controlling the quality of provision are necessary. Opening up the higher education system to private providers necessitates regulatory instruments, legislation, and funding mechanisms tied to QA practices. In order to ensure quality programs, institutions, and systems, the QA capacity building of institutions, QA agencies, and external QA reviewers is necessary.

This theme points to the dual nature of the ideal-type of higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization. The economic globalization argument also opens up possibilities for further integration of the global society (as opposed to further integration of the global markets) with the movement of scholars and students. The references to internationalization activities in the course highlights cultural and political globalization, which are the other dimensions of the ideal type of higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization

Aligning definitions of quality and QA policies with national context.

The five modules assert that national context plays an important role in developing QA, yet national context is not clearly defined. Within the course, national interests are defined more in economic, not cultural or societal terms. National interests for QA include mediating risks to students in terms of poor quality of institutions, supporting trade initiatives in higher education, and strengthening the competitiveness of the national universities. Similar to the World Banks’ view of QA expressed in Learning for All (World Bank, 2011b), aligning national interests to QA policies and practices supports the development of the higher education system.

Although there may be some problems with the pre-fabricated, customizable framework presented in the online course modules, the emphasis on understanding
various definitions of quality and QA is an acknowledgement that context matters. This emphasis on context can be connected with UNESCO’s ideological emphasis on protecting cultural values, as demonstrated in Chapter Five. Yet, the underlying assumption is that these national interests are in relation to the global market and how the national context fits into it. This assumption is evident in the conceptions of quality presented in the modules.

The modules recognize the five conceptions of quality as outlined in Chapter Three (excellence, fitness for purpose, zero defects, transformative, and value-added) and argue that these conceptions can be aggregated into two main definitions: quality as excellence and quality as fitness for purpose. The course cites a paper by Woodhouse (2006) presented at an APQN conference. These two definitions, quality as excellence and quality as fitness for purpose, can then be compared to the two main objectives for QA: improvement and control, which are measured through fitness for purpose or standards-based tools. Given that the emphasis in the modules is on economic globalization, these two main conceptualizations of quality as excellence and quality as fitness for purpose relate more closely to the trends in the global market: excellence as necessary for global or regional competition and quality as fitness for purpose as related to diversifying the higher education system to develop a greater number of skilled workers for the knowledge economy.

Definitions, instruments and functions of QA.

In the course modules, the definition of QA is coherent with the international norms of QA as described in Chapters Three and Five. QA as tied to external QA involves a three staged process of 1) self-assessment, 2) an external review, and 3) a public report.

The modules identify the functions of the QA agencies as mainly data management, decision-making, and reducing conflict of interest in the external review process, as well as to develop or adhere to standards of good practice, however they do not highlight the political nature of QA. As Chapter Two explained, Skolnik (2010) points out that these various tools for measuring quality tend to favor different stakeholders. Although the responsive model that Skolnik (2010) recommends complements several of the ideas presented in the course modules, particularly in
involving as many stakeholders as possible, the modules omit the discussion of the political nature of QA. Even though this module is a beginner course, and the first step of many in developing the individual capacity of new QA professionals, the functions of QA agencies are more sophisticated than described in these modules. Reducing conflict of interest in the external review process is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of how QA can significantly impact programs and institutions depending on the types of tools developed and who is developing and maintaining these tools (Skolnik, 2010).

**Institutional responsibilities.**

The institutional responsibilities defined in the QA process include a scale of autonomy illustrated through a variety of QA practices. Institutional autonomy is not a given in the course modules, but is dependent on the “national context”. Institutional responsibilities in highly autonomous institutions include self-regulation, self-improvement, and self-assessment. As part of the norms of QA, institutions should embrace transparency in the QA process and adopt methods that ensure accountability to the public.

**Debates in QA.**

Throughout the modules, debates in QA are noted and present the pros and cons of the issues with examples of positive uses of QA under discussion. The course notes that debates of QA include: QA as a process that is voluntary vs. compulsory, the use of quantitative vs. qualitative measures, and the affiliation of the QA agency (as affiliated with government or with higher education institutions). Difficulties in the implementation and development of QA were recognized as lying within competing national expectations for the higher education sector and the complexity of understanding how interactions between inputs and processes affect outputs. The modules note that QA can be a discriminatory process, particularly when the QA outcome is attached to funding or it helps develop some sort of ranking system. One of the modules referred participants to the readings section to learn more about debates in QA; however, the reading section did not have any articles that were critical of QA.

Overall, the textual analysis of the course modules shows that the emphasis is more towards emphasizing the role of the state to balance the demands of the market with
the demands of society. Certainly the course modules recognize the role of the state as serving society by ensuring the quality of its higher education system; however, the rationales for ensuring the quality of its higher education system were more economic than socio-cultural or political. This emphasis on the role of the state suggests a shift in the priorities of the nation state, serving economic goals first.

**Online fora.**

Online fora are low cost initiatives that provide the members opportunities to build their professional network and learn from each other, furthering the APQN values of cooperation. The online forum follows a different format to the online course modules. The forum offers discussion themes. The facilitators then offer questions for participants to discuss or to help them to share information about practices in their own countries. Online fora were conducted from April to August 2008, from December 2008 to March 2009, and from October 2010 to November 2010. The first online forum was open to the public, however, since March 2009, it is on the members-only website, which requires a username and password. The first online forum was on internal quality assurance, the second was on writing accreditation, audit or evaluation reports and the third was on best practices in external quality assurance. In each forum, there are four facilitators, one of whom becomes the moderator. Usually the facilitators are from the APQN membership, or at least from within the region (see Appendix M for a list of the moderators and facilitators of each forum). The last online forum had 90 participants representing 18 countries. In each online forum a representative from NAAC has been a facilitator or moderator. Also, several facilitators have been from higher education institutions, which show a strong commitment of the APQN to build cooperation between higher education institutions and QA agencies.

**Consultancies and internships.**

Sponsoring consultancies and internships within the region contributes to the overall cohesiveness of QA policies in the region, as well as providing another venue for QA professionals to network and learn from one another. There has only been one consultancy that has been directly connected to the APQN, other consultancies may be
the result of the consultant database on the APQN website, but the APQN does not formally organize these consultants.

In 2005, the APQN sent a consultant from Philippines Accreditation Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU) on two consultation missions to Cambodia. Prior to the consultant’s visit, the APQN sponsored a workshop for external reviewers in Cambodia. Since then, Cambodian QA agency professionals have gone to the Philippines to receive more training. This particular consultancy is an example of strengthening ties within Southeast Asia by keeping the capacity building activities within the sub-region.

Until 2010, the internships programs were sponsored by AUQA and PAASCU, both home organizations of APQN Presidents (see Appendix N for a list of the internship sponsors and dates). AUQA started the APQN internship program by hosting a QA professional in BAN-PT (Indonesia). PAASCU has also been heavily involved in the internship program. It has sponsored three internships programs, hosting QA professionals from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Mongolia, and Việt Nam. In 2010, Malaysia Qualifications Agency and NAAC began to host internships as well. Within the internship program, the QA professionals attended workshops and observed and participated in accreditation procedures. Providing opportunities for internships builds regional cooperation and helps QA professionals understand each others’ national context for future mutual understanding agreements.

**APQN Activities**

Most of the work of the APQN revolves around its activities such as its projects, publications, and the website. The previous section on events showed a wide diversity of participation of members and, possibly, non-members. In order to clarify terms, activities and events are considered separately in this thesis. Events often involve international flights, housing and meals. Activities are often cheaper than events, have fewer participants, and may not require venue preparations, international flights or housing. The APQN activities focus on creating resources for QA professionals.
APQN projects.

Project groups are a way for APQN members and other agencies in the region to join together to work on a common QA initiative that is expected to benefit the region as a whole. The APQN has a well-defined process for submitting project proposals to the Board for their approval. Only a year in length, unless an extension is approved by the Board, project groups should have no more than five members from at least three different agencies in the region. Agencies cannot host more than two different project groups. The process for submitting a proposal for a project is clearly laid out on the website and includes a variety of guidelines, even the format for how a proposal is written. The website instructions are clearly geared at building capacity for grant-writing.

Before GIQAC, the APQN Finance Committee had direct control of the decision making for funding projects. Now, the Board selects projects that are submitted in a package proposal to the GIQAC to make decisions regarding the funding of projects. This shift in control of who determines the funding of projects points again to the APQN’s deference to the international level, rather than to regional or national bodies.

The Projects are led by Board members and from start to finish can involve between five to eight people from various member organizations (see Appendix O for projects and participating members). Upon completion of the projects, project group coordinators submit completion reports to the APQN Board. The evaluation process of these projects has recently undergone revision to include performance indicators spelled out by GIQAC, under a UNESCO initiative.

Publications.

Some of the APQN projects are publications. One of its first projects was to collaborate with UNESCO Bangkok, the Asia Pacific Program of Educational Innovation in Development, on a publication titled *Toolkit for Regulating the Quality of Cross-Border Education* (2007). Another publication that is less known is *The Chiba Principles* (APQN, 2008b). *The Chiba Principles* are still a work in progress and have not been formally published, however, I consider it a publication because the intention of *The Chiba Principles* is to one-day have it be a point of references like the INQAAHE GGP’s are for its members.
Toolkit for regulating the quality of cross-border education.

The Toolkit provides an overview of issues related to the quality of cross-border education, including international and institutional perspectives of quality. As seen in the course modules sponsored by UNESCO-IIEP and APQN, there exists tension in this document between working with the economic nature of higher education while also recognizing the national context for QA, which may be political and/or socio-cultural.

Most of the issues in the Toolkit are connected to the student experience as it relates to the quality of instruction, content delivery, availability of academic resources, or validity of the qualifications. Other issues presented include using local staff and institutional resources to meet specific national needs such as cultural, linguistic or economic expectations for education.

The Toolkit was meant to complement the OECD/UNESCO Guidelines for Quality Provision of Cross-border Higher Education (2005), and provides a practical guide for regulating cross-border education provision in any region. Although the Toolkit provides examples of regulatory frameworks in Asia and the Pacific and it addresses an issue that is particularly relevant to this region, it does not provide or address a regional dimension to cross-border education. The Toolkit, therefore, is globally applicable.

Frameworks for regulatory mechanisms are offered both for receiving and providing countries with examples from China, Malaysia, New Zealand, Australia and the US. Factors to consider when choosing a regulatory mechanism, particularly for the receiving country include “the size of the market and the maturity of the market (UNESCO & APQN, 2007, p. 22).” In a mature economic system, the government can have a ‘light-handed’ approach because it can rely on consumers to monitor quality.

Funding the regulatory mechanism within the receiving country is also presented in market-oriented terms. The debate is presented over whether cross-border education is seen as a public good, and should be funded by the government through taxes, or as a private good, and funded—at least partially—by the providers. Rationales for considering regulatory mechanisms for providing countries include 1) protecting domestic students if financial troubles occur with the overseas campus, 2) aligning with foreign relations and international aid policies, 3) protecting national and international reputations, and 4) meeting the expectations of the receiving country for domestic approval. Flexibility in the
regulatory mechanism is encouraged for providing countries because of the diversity of cross-border provision and receiving countries legislation and frameworks.

**The Chiba Principles.**

*The Chiba Principles* is a first attempt at spelling out the guiding principles for QA in Asia and the Pacific. They are named after the city of where the APQN Annual General Meeting and Conference was held (in Chiba, Japan) when these principles were first established in January 2008. *The Chiba Principles* were inspired by the APQN’s involvement in the development of the *Brisbane Communiqué* (APQN, 2008b).

*The Chiba Principles* are divided into three overlapping categories: 1) institutional QA, with seven overarching principles 2) QA agencies, with eight overarching principles, and 3) quality assessment\(^\text{13}\), with six overarching principles. The principles are displayed graphically by using two overlapping ovals that show three distinct categories to show QA as the overlapping category between institutional QA and QA agencies. The QA overlapping category highlights the process of QA that includes internal and external assessment, a public report of decisions and recommendations, and steps to be taken in the future. The QA process is focused on institutional and programmatic levels. For institutional QA, the continuous improvement process of self-assessment is emphasized (as opposed to accountability processes). For QA agencies, the independence, autonomy, transparency and adequate funding of the agency(ies) is stressed.

*The Chiba Principles* acknowledge the economic dynamism and cultural, social, and political diversity in Asia and the Pacific and the importance of QA principles in establishing quality higher education provision within national, regional, and global economies. The motivation of *The Chiba Principles* is to “strengthen collaboration and cooperation” in the region (APQN, 2008b, p. 1)” through regionally aligning QA practices and issues; providing agreed upon points of reference for consistency and benchmarking; facilitating academic mobility; encouraging trust, confidence and understanding of the QA systems in the region; improving accountability and

\(^{13}\) In the introduction to the principles, “quality assurance” is the third overlapping category; however, in the graphical display the term “quality assessment” is used. The follow-up survey also indicated that this category is considered “quality assessment.” The survey also found that some of the members felt the interchangeability of quality assurance and quality assessment needed to be resolved (APQN, 2008b).
transparency in higher education institutions; and aligning the region with international developments.

Because of the diversity of the region, *The Chiba Principles* are intentionally generic in nature, and it is expected that they are supplemented with “context-specific approaches,” that are not defined. *The Chiba Principles* are intended to be voluntary in nature and are based on the assumption that national governments are responsible for higher education and the autonomy of QA practices. The premise of these principles is that QA is the primary responsibility of higher education institutions, the implementation of which should be “informed by the needs of various stakeholders.” This message is slightly contradictory to the GIQAC key informant interviews meaning of QA as not just being a job for higher education institutions. This distinction shows an institutional focus of *The Chiba Principles*, which reflects the growing interest of its higher education institutional members. This institutional focus also highlights the lack of regional focus of *The Chiba Principles*.

A survey was conducted of the APQN membership, with GIQAC funding, to identify further areas of revision for *The Chiba Principles*. The survey asked the APQN members to comment on each of the principles within the three categories. For all three categories, there was strong agreement with the principles by those members surveyed. There were two issues discovered with the Quality Assessment principles, 1) the meaning of the term “standards” in a few of the principles, and 2) some operational aspects of publishing the findings report. The awareness of the principles was reported to not be strong among other stakeholders within the members’ countries, which is consistent with the findings from the Vietnamese survey discussed in Chapter Eight. Language and the newness of *The Chiba Principles* were reasons given for the lack of dissemination. Members also identified that more region specific advantages to *The Chiba Principles* need to be articulated.

At the 2009 APQN Conference, a workshop on *The Chiba Principles* was given to facilitate further discussion on the principles. I attended this workshop. Transparency of reporting assessment criteria and results seemed to be a key message in the workshop. The next steps for advancing *The Chiba Principles* were identified by participants as reflecting the diversity of the region in the guidelines and applying QA in each country’s
own context. Some of the participants recognized that *The Chiba Principles* had a strong resemblance to ENQA’s principles and felt that it wasn’t right for the APQN to adopt ENQA’s principles because of the different contextual factors between the two regions. Other comments recognized that in order for *The Chiba Principles* to have “buy-in” national governments and student bodies would have to discuss them. One of the participants stated that the desire to have more “standard and homogenous requirements” is not possible in the Asia Pacific for “several years” because of the diversity of higher education provision in the region. This statement says a lot about the APQN’s version of higher education regionalization. First, the expectation that someday there will be homogeneity in the requirements, even if that possibility is decades away, is an indication of higher education regionalization being a sub-set of globalization because the intent of standardization is to assurance alignment with global and/or regional policies. Second, the idea of diversity is in terms of higher education provision, not cultural or national diversity.

Overall, the values of diversity, building trust and understanding of QA in the region were clearly highlighted in *The Chiba Principles*. The APQN survey and my participant observation of the workshop of *The Chiba Principles* show that unique aspects of QA in Asia and the Pacific must be articulated; however, the focus at this point is more to align QA practices in the region in order to meet international QA norms.

**Website.**

The website is a very important part of the APQN’s outreach activities. It is the public face of the APQN and serves to bring together its members and to attract non-members to becoming affiliated with the APQN. Because the APQN has over 80 members, from 33 countries that span 12 time zones, the website is the best place for members to congregate throughout the year. The website offers a space to share information through its online fora, to highlight publications, to find out about conferences and workshops in the region, and to locate QA experts through an online consultant database. According to the 2010 Annual Report, the APQN’s website has become a model for other QA networks, as a recent World Bank report has noted “…the APQN is an excellent example to follow…” (APQN, 2010c, p. 16).”
Website statistics demonstrate an increase in web traffic over the past few years. According to the 2010 Annual Report (APQN, 2010c) website visits have increased by 623%, with 15,461 visitors between November 2009 and November 2010. The percentage of new visits to the website has not changed, however. The increase in visitors means that more people who know about the APQN are going back to the site. At the end of this chapter, and the next chapter on Việt Nam, the online survey results discuss what the mailing list users are looking at, and how often. The survey lists five types of information on the website: events, database of consultants and reviewers, conference proceedings and workshop materials, and other, to learn about how the website is used. To provide context for the survey, the remaining section is broken down by these categories.

**Events.**

The events section of the website highlights conferences and workshops related to QA providing links to further information. The section is divided up by current, past, and non-APQN events. Each page is laid out similarly with the name of the event, its location, dates, and links for more information. The links often take the user to a different page on the APQN website with further information, including presentations and conference proceedings. The non-APQN events are of events throughout the world related to higher education.

**Database of consultants and reviewers.**

Recently the APQN teamed up with INQAAHE and ANQAHE to use GIQAC funding to develop a consultants and reviewers database (APQN, 2010a). There are currently 78 consultants listed in the database. Consultants must be nominated by someone who works for a QA agency. Nominations and consultant applications are reviewed by a panel of QA professionals from the APQN, INQAAHE, and ANQAHE. The process for how a consultant is nominated is not clearly articulated on the website.

Consultants are typically professionals who work in QA agencies or as independent higher education researchers or QA professionals. The countries in which the consultants reside are globally dispersed; 31% (24/78) are in the Asia Pacific region.
The database of consultants and reviewers is slightly buried on the APQN website under services. On the INQAAHE website, the database is housed on the web page “other resources for members,” implying that the database is not available to non-members. A link to the database on the INQAAHE website eventually sends the user to the APQN website where the database is housed. The hidden location of the database indicates that it may be intended for members-only.

Although the consultants are all listed on the database web page, there is a search function to find a consultant with a particular expertise or language ability. The search function allows the user to enter keywords, select areas of expertise (such as audits, accreditation, or general consultancy), specializations (such as setting up new QA agencies, QA of open learning institutions, or student feedback and surveys), languages, countries, and the sex of the consultant.

The database is organized alphabetically by first name, displays the name of the consultant and nominator, and offers links to information provided by the consultant’s application. There are three parts to the application: a) contact details, language skills, and academic qualifications and training, b) areas of expertise, specializations, and examples of experience, and c) professional summary. The section for examples of experience is very detailed, providing a brief description of the activity, the institution, city and country, the dates, and type of experience.

*Conference proceedings and workshop materials.*

There are not distinct sections on the website for conference proceedings and workshop materials; however, the APQN website offers conference proceedings, workshop presentations and other documents through its virtual library and members-only sections. If members or non-members are interested in the proceedings of a conference or workshop sponsored by the APQN, they can find it all on the website: presentations, photos, conference papers, reports, etc. One of the Vietnamese key informants explained that when they were first trying to learn about QA, they used the APQN website as part of their education. In 2009, several of the conference proceedings and workshop materials went into the members-only website; however, there are many materials available to individuals interested in QA capacity building in the region.
Other.

The website includes other resources such as its constitution, newsletters, annual reports, and contact information for members. For other regional networks and international organizations interested in what the APQN is doing, the project reports, links to other regional networks and QA agencies, and the MOUs and MOCs may also be of interest.

The APQN events and activities show a clear focus on helping developing countries understand international QA norms and how to implement these norms within their national contexts. The values of the APQN as seen through these activities are cooperation, learning together, and building trust. Very little discussion can be seen about regional identity or regional economic posturing.

Textual Analysis Findings

The textual analysis illustrates that the APQN’s participation in QA norm-setting is mainly based on diffusing international norms into national practice. It does not highlight a strong regional identity, which is missing in most of the documents. Many of its activities, such as the internship program, the consultant and reviewer databases, and its mutual recognition project, are laying the groundwork for further regional cooperation, although it’s too early to tell if future regional integration will play out only within the sub-regions, or if it will spread to the Asia Pacific pan-regional level. The MOUs and MOCs signed by individual member organizations further advance regional harmonization or mutual recognition agendas through the harmonization of national policies.

The APQN values asserted in its QA capacity building activities at the national level, as seen through the textual analysis, emphasizes cooperation, equality among members, and strengthening higher education systems for competition in the global market. The participant observation data identifies that the APQN needs to reconcile the differences between how its QA agency members negotiate the role of the state and the QA norms that QA agencies are independent, autonomous bodies. This tension between state regulation and institutional autonomy illustrates the differences between neo-liberal (global market orientated) and liberal institutional (global society oriented) perspectives.
The APQN’s focus on the international level, through its partnerships with UNESCO and the participation of APQN Board members at international meetings, highlights the individual agency of its Board members. As the GIQAC interviews pointed out, the passion and professionalism of the APQN Board members has contributed to its success. The individual Board members have a strong affiliation with international actors, such as UNESCO, World Bank, and INQAAHE, and that individual association influences the APQN’s direction. The policy discourse analysis would place the APQN squarely in the higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization, between the neo-liberal and liberal international perspectives of globalization.

When comparing the textual analysis of the APQN to those international organizations described in Chapter Five, commonality of QA norms can be seen. Table 6.5 provides a comparison between the textual analysis section of the international organizational documents and the APQN’s documents. The main norms of QA that the APQN and the international organizations share are having an internal and external QA process that is transparent. The international organizations emphasize having an independent QA body in the external QA process more than is emphasized in the APQN documents. The common values that the APQN and the four international organizations share are knowledge sharing and cooperation with complementary values such as finding commonality among diversity, partnerships, and strengthening higher education for market competition. The regional identity is mainly geographical with little discussion about what being Asian Pacific means for the network.

What this comparison between the textual analysis of the international organizational documents and the textual analysis of the APQN documents suggests is that higher education regionalization is being enacted by the APQN in international rather than national or regionally-specific terms. The history of higher education in the region shows a strong influence of colonialism within the past two centuries; however, there is evidence of a rich tradition of higher education with indigenous religious and philosophical roots preceding the nineteenth century. The current form of higher education regionalization appears to reflect the influence of colonialism over the rich indigenous traditions of higher education in the region.
This chapter has highlighted how the development of the APQN has influenced its focus on QA capacity building activities to assist developing countries understand and meet international QA norms. The first six years of the APQN’s development has been strongly influenced by international actors with its own foundation as a potential sub-group of INQAAHE and the DGF funding from the World Bank. Membership development is catching up with the population of the region; so that the majority of members are now from low to low-middle income countries. The majority of the Board leadership comes from upper and upper-middle income countries, which may remain the case for some time because these members have access to more resources for volunteering for these roles. Having Board leaders from upper and upper-middle income countries may mean that these leaders have greater ties to international levels of QA capacity building. Board leaders from upper and upper-middle income countries also might be part of bi-lateral international development agencies that favor particular types of QA policies and practices, which may impact how the APQN promotes QA norms.

APQN events allow host country participants to learn more about national, regional and international perspectives of QA, while also bringing the members together to focus on their own international aspirations. APQN activities are nationally focused with the purpose of using QA mechanisms to “strengthen” higher education institutions and national systems to be more competitive globally. The regional dimension of APQN activities and events is more for exchanging information and training in a more cost-effective way (keeping travelling costs down because it is done within the region) than it is to highlight regional specificities.

### Table 6.5 Comparison between APQN and International QA Actors

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textual Analysis</th>
<th>APQN</th>
<th>International</th>
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<td>Internal &amp; external QA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Transparent reporting</td>
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<td>Capacity building</td>
<td>Independent QA agency</td>
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<td><strong>Values</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Knowledge sharing</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Equality among members</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Strengthening HE for market competition</td>
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<td></td>
<td>International recognition</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Regional Identity</strong></td>
<td>Geographically determined</td>
<td>Geographically determined</td>
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</table>
Chapter Seven: Perceptions of APQN Actors

APQN provides a global overview of QA practices and trends in the region, which can be utilized as consideration in QA implementation and policymakers (Survey Response).

The findings chapters on the international actors involved in QA capacity building and the textual analysis of the history and activities of the APQN highlight a strong focus on the international, rather than the regional, dimensions of QA. The values that are emphasized focus on economic rationales for adopting QA norms. This chapter provides the perspectives of the APQN actors, through key informant interviews and survey responses. This chapter will provide a more holistic picture of the APQN in order to illustrate how the APQN enacts higher education regionalization.

Key Informant Interviews

As mentioned in Chapter Four, 11 interviews were conducted of 15 APQN key informants during two annual general conferences in Ha Noi, Việt Nam in 2009, and in Bangkok, Thailand in 2010. Two of the interviews included observers because the main key informant wanted to use the interviews for training purposes. All of the key informants were from QA agencies; six were women; five were men. One interview was conducted by email. Six key informants had PhD degrees.

The main criteria for selecting informants were that they had an intimate understanding of the APQN. Requests for interviews were sent to 20 people via email who had served, or currently serve, on the APQN Board, who were involved in the APQN’s administration, or who were representatives of member organizations. In recruiting key informants, I tried to achieve breadth in the geographical regions represented. I was able to recruit key informants from East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania. I was not able to secure an interview with someone from Central Asia.

I used open coding to identify eight themes found in the interviews. As Chapter Four describes, my coding process was open-ended rather than establishing a priori coding to let the themes emerge. From the research audit, I was able to recognize my own
bias in wanting to understand the values of the APQN, so I changed a theme from “values associated with QA activities” to “the teambuilding nature of the APQN,” which more accurately described the comments in this particular theme. The eight themes that emerged were: 1) realities of building QA in developing countries, 2) challenges to QA capacity building, 3) donors roles in QA capacity building, 4) the understanding of QA, 5) norm-setting activities and actors 6) the teambuilding nature of the APQN, 7) regional and professional identity, and 8) the benefits of APQN activities and events.

“Rather than reinventing something, we just picked and choosed”.

Often international development money for higher education is first used for general capacity building. Then, when the higher education system has received enough funding for infrastructure and small quality improvement projects, a QA system will be introduced, as was the case in Việt Nam. One key informant shared “with a little bit of incentive, a little external funding, the governments seem to take it [QA] seriously and try to put in, you know, more money into it (APQN.03.05.09Member2).”

The key informants from developing countries all described to me a similar process of how QA was initiated in their country. First, there was recognition by the government that the universities were not competitive internationally or regionally, and could get “left behind” if they did not strengthen their higher education provision. Second, a committee was established to determine the types of QA mechanisms relevant for their system. Sometimes an external (international or regional) technical advisor consulted with the committee to identify the best mechanisms. Third, extensive international and regional research was done to determine what sort of restructuring of the system was needed and what type of quality criteria would be acceptable. Study tours were part of this research component. One key informant shared “We took only those parameters that were quantifiable and easy to do (APQN.03.05.09Member9).” The Vietnamese embedded case study in Chapter Eight describes a similar process.

Typically the governments’ goals for the higher education system drive the establishment of QA mechanisms. As another key informant identified, depending on the capacities of the higher education institutions, the government can have a “soft touch” or a “hard touch and will be more prescriptive about standards (APQN.03.03.09Member1).”
The capacities of the higher education institutions are often measured against other higher education systems in the region, or measured based on the ranking of institutions on international ranking tables.

“Need an external push”.

The main challenges to QA capacity building are funding and resources. Although QA is often not high on the higher education agenda, when a little funding is offered by international development agencies, governments take notice, as the Vietnamese case will demonstrate. One key informant explained the influence that the World Bank and UNESCO have in directing developing countries towards QA development because of the DGF:

…if these inter-governmental organizations put quality assurance or a recognition on the agenda, it doesn’t mean that things happen very quickly. But then if there’s money for these initiatives, then the governments will put these initiatives on the agenda. So for the Asia Pacific region…UNESCO and the World Bank, have a lot of influence as well in terms of the direction of the countries. Although the governments take operational decisions in terms of QA, there’s also a push from other sources to put it on the agenda (APQN.03.05.09Member2).

The “push” for developing QA mechanisms is towards governments who do not have QA mechanisms in place. As more and more countries are looking to harmonize their systems, QA mechanisms are essential to the harmonization process. One key informant from Southeast Asia mentioned his organization’s interest in becoming a member of APQN to use it as a platform for “networking and sharing” so that they can “upgrade and harmonize …with other Higher Education Institutions, ASEAN, and Asia Pacific Region (APQN.03.15.10Member12).”

The main challenges to QA capacity building as identified by the key informants who were all from QA agencies, is institutional and systems-level QA development. Often programmatic QA systems for engineering, medical science, nursing, architecture, law, urban planning, are already in place—even if a national QA system is not—which may be why ASEAN was able to harmonize these programs. Capacity building for institutional QA mechanisms, such as instituting student evaluations of teachers and the transparency of teachers’ assessments of students is challenging because of issues related
to corruption or bias. Systems-level QA requires a large enough system to overcome matters related to conflict of interest. In small countries, like those in the Pacific islands, finding an external reviewer who does not have an interest in the outcome of the QA review is very challenging. When QA resources are limited, external reviewers are selected who live nearby, and thus are most likely to have a greater personal connection to the university. Several key informants from developing countries, including Việt Nam, mentioned that having external reviewers who are from outside of the country or in another region of the country is desirable, but often unrealistic because of the lack of funding.

Another challenge to QA capacity building, which was not on the forefront of the key informants’ minds, but often came out when I asked about indigenous ways of knowing, was how to manage QA for the culture-specific, endogenous institutions. I usually received three types of responses: 1) the QA system doesn’t include indigenous institutions, 2) culture-specific institutions didn’t concern their QA work, and 3) the local institutions resisted being brought into the process because there was concern that more knowledge would be lost in the QA process. One key informant shared the following comment:

See we have a lot of knowledge that has disappeared, because we have old traditions, and maybe this is a way for how to preserve some of our knowledge and traditions, and so that’s one of our mandates, to recognize the traditional knowledge through qualifications. How we are going to do it? We haven’t assessed it out yet, but we know that traditional knowledge, for the rest of how we operate, I think it’s important to show local ways of doing things, and that means a lot of talking and consultation and reaching for consensus (APQN.03.06.09Member8).

Finding the right QA professional interested in bridging the epistemological gap between traditional indigenous ways of knowing and the western notions of QA is quite tricky and time-consuming. For countries with limited resources, and limited qualified personnel, appropriately addressing indigenous institutions in the QA capacity building process is a challenge, and often ignored.

Often national qualifications registers came up in the interviews with key informants from developing countries. One key informant from a small developing
country discussed the practices of one of their bi-lateral donors and noted their challenges with identifying what should be considered as “national”:

Yeah, their register is a bit complicated. And we don’t want to go down that road. We want to keep ours very simple. Yeah. So, we have a lot to learn from them, but having said that, it doesn’t mean that we’ll follow them blindly. What we call national qualification is quite complicated at the moment….The word national…means we need to protect it. In order to protect it you have to have some criteria (APQN.03.06.09Member8).

Protecting national programs requires some sense of national identity, and from that, national criteria can be developed.

“Helping developing economies sit on the same platform”.

Donor roles in QA capacity building initiatives, either at the bi-lateral or multi-lateral level, were seen by the key informants from industrialized countries as primarily helping developing countries exchange information. Some of the first DGF was used to fund travel to conferences and workshops for QA professionals in developing countries. One key informant explains:

I think this is where international organizations come in and play a major role through their capacity development activities by providing some support for sharing of experience. Other ways…for example you take APQN, before the World Bank money was available, the developing countries found it very difficult to attend conferences. And during the first three years of the World Bank funding, we were able to bring a lot of people into the conferences and discussions. We made people go and attend meetings and observe quality assurance, audits, and things like that in other countries. People found it very helpful….I would think that the role of the international bodies is more in terms of helping developing economies to sit on the same platform and talk to the developed systems and learn from their experiences (APQN.03.03.09Member1).

Learning from the experiences of more mature QA systems, or sharing of experiences, is a main theme throughout the key informant interviews as well as in the open-ended comments on the survey.

For the APQN, the discussion is not just one directional, with upper income and upper-middle income countries/territories consulting low-middle and low income countries. There is an expectation that low income and low-middle income countries/territories have representation on the APQN Board. One Board member noted
that in the first DGF, the World Bank encouraged them to include members from developing countries:

The World Bank asked, “hey, where are the small countries?” …. There’s some kind of equitable distribution because that’s what capacity building is for…. and that’s when we reached out to Bangladesh, Laos, and Indonesia, we waited for them, they were kind of slow, and they came late. So we were able to touch all those countries with emerging accrediting agencies (APQN.03.06.09Member3).

The funding of travel for developing countries supports capacity building in terms of understanding QA, but also gives a voice to QA professionals in developing countries at regional and international conferences. As the section on the APQN conferences described there is a balance between presentations given by industrialized and developing countries.

The recognition by the international community, such as at the OECD expert meetings on the AHELO project, or at UNESCO’s WCHE shows that the APQN has been given legitimacy as an Asian Pacific voice on QA. The reason why the APQN has been able to achieve this recognition in such a short period of time is the trust and respect given to some of the Board members who are internationally recognized. One key informant acknowledged:

…[W]e are able to attract onto the Board people who are willing to put in a lot of time and effort and who can speak on behalf of APQN, so that they are trusted by the members but also respected by the international communities. I think these two things go hand in hand (APQN.03.05.09Member2)

Therefore, information sharing by the APQN is multi-directional: between industrialized and developing countries and between national and international actors.

Since the GIQAC is funding several regional QA networks, information sharing is also possible between regional QA networks. One key informant suggested that the GIQAC funding should also encourage sharing across regional QA networks:

The money comes from the same place, so I think the idea is to have a networking and cooperation between the regional networks. One of the ideas that I had to go into the next GIQAC funds was a regional meeting place. A meeting place for the regional networks. Obviously INQAAHE has something bi-annually, but to build something online that the regional networks can all learn from each other to share and communicate…(APQN.03.05.09Member5).
Serving as a super-node, linking multiple actors in different networks, could give the APQN, and those funding it, tremendous power in shaping QA globally.

Another key informant noted that “as more and more external reference points are developed in terms of learning outcomes and standards specifications, then it’s true that the institutions accept them (APQN.03.03.09Member1).” Institutional acceptance is the main key to successful QA, as the Vietnamese case and other key informants have demonstrated. The acceptance of international practices of QA can make the domestic implementation of QA easier for QA agencies, as well.

“People should ask more about the suitability of certain aspects”.

The understanding of QA is largely related to making sure that the QA measurements relate to context. Asking questions seemed to be a common theme among the key informants, whether asking themselves questions about how to deepen their own understanding of QA, or asking about the suitability of QA practices. When discussing quality and QA with me, most key informants mentioned terms of measurement related to input, process, output and outcomes, identifying that the “process should be acceptable to institutions (APQN.03.03.09Member1)”. Key informants who came from an accreditation model of QA, talked about QA agencies as accrediting agencies, using a hidden assumption that all QA agencies followed an accreditation method. Key informants who came from an audit model tended to use more general terms for QA, not aligning their comments to a particular method.

Some mature QA agencies recognize the need to ask questions about why certain information is required, or whether proposed QA systems are valid to the national context. One key informant from a mature QA system stated that

…I think that people should ask more questions about the suitability of certain aspects. That is not very strong here. So, during discussion when I go to the training or when I discuss with people about good practices I always tell them, ‘what is good for Australia may not be good for another country. What worked in India may not work well in Mauritius.’ So, people need to ask questions about the validity and goodness and success of the practice (APQN.03.03.09Member1).

Even if the key informants recognized that the suitability of QA measurements or processes must be investigated and questioned
Another key informant shared the questions she had been pondering during the APQN conference on the QA process:

[T]he problem that I see, in getting from ‘you do have the information, please give it to us’, but also in terms of about why we need it. And I’ve been thinking in the last couple days, so I’ve been writing notes...when we think about evaluation, how can you evaluate student achievement against learning outcomes, if you haven’t articulated them properly and publicly (APQN.03.05.09Member4)?

Articulating the goals for the QA assessment, and the reasons for those goals, are an important factor in QA. Publicly making these goals accessible is also a necessary component to QA. One key informant noted that “stakeholders need to know the QA processes in the country (APQN.03.05.09Member10).” Most of the key informants would consider stakeholders in a national perspective, not identifying foreign stakeholders, like the foreign providers in Việt Nam.

“We know that there are good practices”.

Implicit norms of QA can be seen in how the key informants talked about standards and good practices and how context and cultural diversity plays into accepting these good practices. When I asked a key informant about the regional and international standards that the APQN tries to support, she responded:

Yes at the international level, we are supportive of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies and its principles, because we are aware that there is a huge diversity among the countries in terms of the higher education development, the cultural contexts. The context is different from country to country. So we know that we won’t be able to have an international standard for quality assurance, but we know that there are good practices. So, at the principles level, it is possible to agree on some good principles. So we think from that point of view, INQAAHE’s good practices are very acceptable to us. If you look at cross-border/trans-border education then UNESCO’s guidelines are acceptable to us. And although the European standards and guidelines are very region specific, we do see that they are in alignment with the INQAAHE good practices so we are supportive of that. And for the region we have been discussing the Chiba Principles (APQN.03.03.09Member1).

The distinction between standards and good practices is made on the basis of cultural context. According to this key informant, good practices are common agreed-upon
principles, or norms, of appropriate QA. Another key informant from a mature QA system gave a similar answer when asked the same question about regional and international standards:

APQN.03.06.09Member3

There is the INQAAHE, the GGP, and now we have the *Chiba Principles*, if we only started it last year. And now, but it has taken a life of its own. These are standards for accrediting agencies. That’s what we’re talking about. It’s not international standards for institutions.

MM:

That’s what I’m wondering. Are there standards for accrediting agencies?

APQN.03.06.09Member3

Good practices. We don’t like, well, I’m speaking for myself, “international standards” because you have to put it in context. There are national concerns, and even in an institution, like when you are accrediting, you cannot say international standards. There is no single [standard], and there have been I guess a few specialists about this, but there is no such thing as international standards. But now, because ISO [9000] has come about, but they are not meant for institutions.

This key informant expresses an implicit norm that institutions must follow common principles, but because of cultural differences, not all institutions should be subjected to an international standard.

As QA professionals from organizations who had to apply for and become approved as full members of the APQN, the key informants accepted both explicit and implicit norms of QA. Explicit norms of QA involve some type of an external evaluation exercise whether the exercise is for accreditation, degree completion, or publication purposes. Examples of explicit norms are stated in the INQAAHE’s GGP or the European Qualifications Framework. Implicit norms would be how criteria of quality are established and conceptualized; that context is important; diversity is important.

Another key informant agreed with the approach that not all institutions should be subjected to standards; however, he felt that it was appropriate for some institutions.

MM
So, in terms of looking at the international…. do you think there are international standards of QA that have to be negotiated?

APQN.03.03.09Member 7

Yes, we have to negotiate them. But not all universities…, but I think many national universities want to borrow international standards.

MM:

Because they’re globally competitive…?

APQN.03.03.09Member 7

For example, [the top university in the country] is a research university in an international field. So they have to follow international standards. But for example, the very small colleges… it’s not necessary to follow international standards. So I think that we can say that national government cannot maintain the quality of all the different types of institutions. I think that this is the same throughout the world.

This key informant highlights that there is an implicit normative notion that the diversity, aims, and expectations of institutions should drive the appropriateness of certain QA approaches over others. This key informant comes from a differentiated system of higher education, which influences this notion of diversity and the appropriateness of QA to institutional mission. Institutional ranking based on research output may not be appropriate for small liberal arts colleges, whereas the ranking of the student experience may not be favorable to large research universities. Using fitness for purpose as a definition for measuring quality allows a higher education system to cater its QA mechanisms to a diverse group of higher education institutions.

A key informant from a developing country described the process he and his colleagues followed when implementing QA in his country.

…[T]his division that took up the responsibility to implement the quality assurance programs, and with the help of QAC [Quality Assurance Committee], we were able to develop a number of criteria for various things….. What should be the minimum requirement? For example, if you have to be associate professor, then you need a PhD, at least, with so many publications, and so many years of experience, and so for professor, you have this sort of requirement….There was no coursework in some universities for M Phil or PhD, so we introduced coursework, and then we
made it compulsory that all the PhDs will be evaluated by developed countries. They will not be evaluated within the country. There were problems of favoritism, etc. To avoid that the thesis will go to developed countries, or academically developed countries. They will not be evaluated within the country…. We are conscious that if our degrees are to be valued, they are to be considered on par with international degrees, then we have to at least meet the minimum criteria of the award of those degrees, and the quality of those degrees have to be at that level, it has to be acceptable at the international market...(APQN.03.05.09Member9).

This key informant and his colleagues recognized there were international norms for developing explicit QA criteria that would demonstrate to the international market that its graduates were competitive and complied with international norms for higher education quality. He continued to explain the types of documentation they used to develop their minimum criteria:

We are taking lead from the Bologna Process and how Europeans are trying to manage their diversity, so that is the same type of diversity we have within the country. So we have, you see, we also look at the European model, and we get help from INQAAHE and APQN. We just look at that and try to evaluate (APQN.03.05.09Member9).

In describing the international and regional organizations that have helped his division establish QA criteria, two regional organizations and initiatives and one international organization were cited, which shows, for this key informant, that regional organizations (those in Europe) have made an international impact on QA development.

Another key informant from an upper income country also recognized the European influence on establishing QA initiatives, yet was able to offer some critical reflection about looking to Europe:

[F]or years we have been looking to Europe, and I think that’s more because there was, [pause] not really a vacuum, but the Asian Pacific region was less developed in terms of European standards and guidelines; the register of quality assurance agencies and the EQF [European Qualifications Framework]…..It’s not in terms that it is leading, but it’s a place to start in terms of referencing. It’s something to reference yourself against. I think, I don’t know how well placed the Asia Pacific region is at the moment to do in terms of shaping or providing principles and guidelines. There are the Chiba Principles, of course, but in terms of an Asia Pacific framework, if you like. The question is ‘do we need one?’ I don’t know. Do we need one? I think there are other ways of doing it…(APQN.03.05.09Member4).
Although the key informant didn’t articulate alternative practices for QA, the awareness of how the current norms of QA came to be, indicates that as far as the life cycle of the norms of QA, some have not been internalized, and may be altered based on regional interpretation.

“A little bit like a family”.

The team building nature of the APQN can be identified in many of the key informants’ comments about feeling a sense of belonging to the APQN. A few referred to it as being like a family, with the older QA agencies as the elders of the family. One key informant remarked: “This is a culture based on respecting elders, and so that it follows even in quality assurance (APQN.03.03.09Member1).”

Because the development of the membership happened over time, new members were welcomed a little each time. Another key informant described: “Any time there were new members, there were just a few, so it was a core group that kept on expanding, so it was a little bit like a family: we took in new family members (APQN.03.05.09Member2).” This same key informant compared the APQN to ENQA and noted that the APQN accepted varying degrees of QA and did not have to have high standards as ENQA is concerned about. “[W]e all want to help each other; it’s all about capacity building (APQN.03.05.09Member2).”

As the section on the Board earlier in Chapter Six illustrated, initially Board members were from upper or upper-middle income countries. In order for the Board to represent the membership, it has had to diversify. One Board member acknowledged, “...we have to be more geographically balanced, and also we should have big and small, mature and not so mature, in the Board. But of course, as Board members you need to have certain kind of expertise (APQN.03.06.09Member3).” Needing a certain level of expertise on the Board highlights a need to be a well-established QA professional. The respected character of Board members is important as they provide legitimacy for the APQN in the international community, which has been necessary for the APQN’s success, as indicated by the GIQAC interviews.
“We really just want to talk about our day to day practices”.

Although the APQN is for the Asia Pacific region, it is first and foremost a network of QA professionals, thus its main identity is derived from how QA professionals in Asia and the Pacific define their work. One key informant described the APQN’s identity as “…having a concern about the Asia Pacific region, specifically to assist countries without QA and assist institutional development (APQN.03.03.10Member11).” Another key informant recognized the “wide range of development,” and the ability for countries with well developed QA systems to help their neighbors without QA systems:

I think what we have here in the Asia Pacific region is a number of Asian countries who do have really good developed QA systems and qualifications systems that can assist their very close neighbors who don’t. And I think that’s the good thing about it, is that we do have a wide range of development, from newly developing to established (APQN.03.05.09Member4).

Diversity is the also a common identity of the APQN described by the key informants. Whether it’s diversity of QA systems, economic-status, or cultures, the key informants recognize that the APQN’s role is to create bridges between the differences.

The APQN’s geographical identity is largely defined by those who are funding the activities: the World Bank and UNESCO. The region itself is arguably two regions tied together with the common identity of having a large number of developing countries with limited resources, either because they are too small to generate a lot of resources, or too big in population to use resources towards higher education. One key informant identified the marginalized nature of the Pacific in the Asia Pacific regional initiatives. The key informant explained,

APQN is supposed to be regional, now from where I come from Pacific is regional, but it’s Asia Pacific, like in UNESCO’s region. The Pacific is always a side piece to these regional organizations, and so you look around for representation from the Pacific, there’s not that many, there’s mainly Asia. As far as the benefit, I think there’s inequity of, yeah, by the very fact that even in this area is undeveloped in the Pacific, and you’ve got many small countries who can’t afford to set up its quality assurance

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14 At the time we spoke the Board had not had a member from the Pacific islands, however, this changed between 2009 and 2010 when Fepulea’i Sinapi Moli, from Samoa, was appointed as a co-opted Board Member.
agencies. And so we can only hope that the APQN can do something about it and bring on board those very small countries….. Like when I was in the ministry there was a lot of Asia Pacific, the Pacific is tied together with Asia as a region, but most of the activities are in Asia (APQN.03.06.09Member8).

“APQN offers a network for sharing and exchanging information”.

When asked about the benefits of APQN membership or the contributions the APQN has made to QA capacity building, most key informants acknowledged sharing information and experiences with others. One key informant believed that “80% of the problems we face in QA are the same….The APQN offers a network for sharing and exchanging information (APQN.03.05.09Member10)” Regardless of the diversity of culture, economics, politics, or geography, many of the key informants saw they had “a lot to offer but also a lot to learn (APQN.03.05.09Member4)”.

Some key informants used the APQN as a benchmark for measuring themselves against other countries. A key informant from the Pacific noted that their last APQN meeting “was really an eye opener for me in terms of seeing where we stand in terms of the region; that we were not on our own (APQN.03.06.09Member8)” Understanding what is happening in the sub-region is also important.

The key informants from South Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia all mentioned cooperating and discussing with others from their region. One key informant from East Asia asserted that participating in APQN events is “…best for us to collect information about transnational education (APQN.03.03.09Member7)” This key informant explained that at every conference he attends—APQN conferences, INQAAHE conferences, Council of Higher Education Associations conferences—that he identifies individual agencies who can sign memorandums with his organization for further collaboration on QA activities. Although the key informants’ experiences and common sense would dictate that QA networking at APQN events happens more at the sub-regional or regional levels, the survey, discussed in the next section, implies that more ties are made with international organizations than with sub-regional or regional organizations.

The interviews highlight the values of cooperation, sharing experiences, learning together, respecting diversity, building trust and respect, similar to those identified in Chapter Six. What the interviews also bring out is the focus on inclusion, respect for
cultural diversity, and understanding context, which is less obvious in the policy discourse analysis of APQN events and activities. Professional identity is more important than regional identity as the key informant interviews brought out. Regional identity is defined geographically, and the recognition of the size and diversity of Asia and the Pacific provide for a very loose sense of identity.

The key informant interviews discuss how networking, sharing experiences, and learning together help support the understanding of QA and QA norms. The norm-setting role of the APQN is more about helping countries/territories understand the norms than persuading the countries/territories to use them. The APQN’s focus on the national level is to build capacity through information sharing and QA training, and its focus on the international level is to use QA guidelines, like the GGP, to guide national development.

Comparison between GIQAC and APQN Key Informants

Comparing the perspectives shared by the GIQAC and the APQN key informants interviews hints at some distinctions between the international and regional dimensions of QA capacity building. Table 7.1 illustrates the main themes shared by the key informants and shows how the international actors take a high-level perspective of QA capacity building activities and the role that regional networks can play in asserting regional appropriateness of international norms while also disseminating QA norms. Whereas the APQN key informants are more operational in the role that regional actors play in national QA capacity building.

The operational perspective of the APQN key informants may suggest that at this point in time, the APQN does not see itself as a norm generator; it may facilitate the adoption of QA norms, but it does not necessarily create new norms. The last section, which analyzes an online survey I conducted in 2010, will further elaborate on the APQN’s role in the region as a QA norm-setter.
### Table 7.1 Comparison of GIQAC and APQN Key Informant Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>GIQAC Key Informant Interviews</th>
<th>APQN Key Informant Interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QA understanding</td>
<td>Internal and external QA</td>
<td>Context is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Qualitative vs. quantitative measures</td>
<td>Internal and external QA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some international standards but not too many</td>
<td>Common principles, like GGP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>QA often attached to money</td>
<td>Definition for quality is fitness for purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not a Western concept, an academic concept</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges for QA</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Conflict of interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private vs. public institutions</td>
<td>Corruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cross-border higher education</td>
<td>Cross-border higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual capacity</td>
<td>Addressing needs of indigenous institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional cooperation/identity</td>
<td>Can help assert regional needs on international level</td>
<td>Use regional level for benchmarking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub-regional better for operational aspects of higher education</td>
<td>Programmatic harmonization at regional level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional helpful to international QA norm-setting</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QA capacity building</td>
<td>Networked societies important to foster</td>
<td>Inter-regional dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sensitive to building capacity while maintaining rigorous standards</td>
<td>Attending conferences important for professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Funding external reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Identifying opportunities for MOU/MOCs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### APQN Mailing List

Analysis of the online mailing list offers some interesting insights into who is interested in the APQN. The request form for the online mailing list asks individuals to identify the type of organization they represent.

When reviewing the mailing list data to find duplicates, I found many errors in how the organization type was reported. This variation could be explained by the lack of clarity in the categories offered—governmental, university, agency inside the region, agency outside the region, and other. Individuals from agencies that were quasi-governmental could self-identify their organization as being an agency or being the
government. Members from higher education institutions that were not considered universities often categorized their institution as “other”. Although there was great variation in how mailing list members classified their organization, a rough picture can be painted. Overall the rough estimate of organizations from which the mailing list subscribers come are: 13% (n=54) governmental, 42% (n=170) university, 25% (n=120) agency inside the region, 3% (n=13) agency outside the region, and 16% (n=64) other. The other category also yielded some interesting findings. Many “other” categories included graduate students, private consultants, NGOs, and international and regional organizations.

**APQN Survey**

In order to understand the opinions and characteristics of QA professionals interested in Asia and the Pacific, a survey of the APQN mailing list was conducted between September and October 2010. A census of the mailing list was conducted. In total, 407 professionals were contacted and 154 responded to the survey, yielding a 38% response rate. Table 7.2 provides a summary of the respondents by member status, socio-economic status and education level.

The survey objectives were to 1) collect the opinions of professionals who are interested in QA policies and practices in Asia and the Pacific and their views of the APQN, 2) compare the non-member and member’s exposure to the APQN’s QA capacity building activities, 3) compare the opinions of professionals from countries with different socio-economic status, 4) identify the backgrounds of the higher education professionals interested in the APQN’s capacity building activities in the Asia Pacific and 5) articulate why higher education professionals are interested in the APQN’s capacity building activities in the Asia Pacific.

APQN members were more likely to respond than non-members. The sample had a larger percentage of individuals from non-member organizations (63%, n=290) than from APQN member organizations (27%, n=117), yet of the survey respondents, 41% (n=63) self-identified as being from a member organization, and 49% (n=76) self-identified as not being from a member organization. Disaggregating the response rate by
member status, individuals from member organizations had a 58% response rate, and individuals from non-member organizations had a 27% response rate.

**Table 7.2 Summary of Respondents of the Administered Online Survey Questionnaire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Sub-Categories</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-member</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country/Territory</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Economic Status</td>
<td>Upper Middle</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Middle</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Income</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Undergraduate diploma</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some graduate study</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>154</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individuals from higher education institutions were also more likely to respond to the survey. The sample population was made up of 42% (n=170) higher education institutions, and 49% (n=65) of the respondents self-identified as being from a higher education institution. Within the total APQN member organizations, 36% (n=29) are from higher education institutions. Table 7.3 shows the variation between sample size, respondents, and APQN membership.

All of the respondents had post-secondary degrees. Many had completed postgraduate study; 8% (n=12) had completed some graduate study, 40% (n=62) had graduate degrees, 40% (n=61) had PhDs. Based on the titles that mailing list participants had self-selected, the sample had 155 PhD holders, yielding a 39% response rate, similar to the overall response rate. The percentage of men and women respondents appears to roughly equate the gender ratio of the two APQN meetings I attended; 82 (54%) were men, 70
(46%) were women. Of the respondents, 26% (n=35) self-identified as being from a governmental department, 15% (n=20) from NGOs, 16% (n=21) from regional (and international organizations, 19% (n=25) from the private sector, and 13% (n=18) as other.

**Duration of interest in quality assurance.**

Almost half of the respondents have been interested in QA for more than five years. The highest percentage of respondents self-identified as having been interested in QA for 3 – 5 years (32.5%), as illustrated in Figure 7.1, which is the same as the Vietnamese survey participants. Chapter Eight will show that only 33% of the total Vietnamese survey respondents had identified as having more than five years of interest in QA. Considering the relative newness of QA in Asia and the Pacific, the APQN provides a space for those interested in QA to share experiences, as many of the key informants also noted.

![Figure 7.1. Years of QA interest of English version respondents](image-url)
Participation in APQN events.

Half of the survey respondents (n=77) had not attended an APQN event before, as Figure 7.2 shows. Of the 77 who had not attended an APQN event, 54 were not members. Of the 74 of the survey respondents who had attended an APQN event, 27 had only attended one event, 14 had attended two events, 20 had attended three events, six had attended five to seven events, and seven had attended more than seven events. The number of attended APQN events is statistically different at a rigorous level of significance (p < .001), between member and non-member, as shown by their Chi-Square value, $\chi^2 (5, n=140) = 28.777$.

Table 7.3 Population, Sample, and Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-Economic Status</th>
<th>Countries/ Territories of Asia &amp; the Pacific&lt;sup&gt;15&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>APQN Member Countries</th>
<th>Countries/ Territories in Sample Frame</th>
<th>Individual Survey Respondents English</th>
<th>Individual Survey Respondents Vietnamese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Income</td>
<td>21% (n=11)</td>
<td>29% (n=23)</td>
<td>41% (n=21)</td>
<td>30% (n=41)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Middle Income</td>
<td>12% (n=6)</td>
<td>13% (n=10)</td>
<td>16% (n=8)</td>
<td>12% (n=16)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Middle Income</td>
<td>38% (n=20)</td>
<td>24% (n=19)</td>
<td>27% (n=14)</td>
<td>28% (n=38)</td>
<td>100% (n =12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Income</td>
<td>25% (n=13)</td>
<td>34% (n=27)</td>
<td>14% (n=7)</td>
<td>10% (n=28)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>6% (n=3)</td>
<td>1% (n=1)</td>
<td>2% (n=1)</td>
<td>20% (n=31)</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHD degree holders</th>
<th>Sample Frame</th>
<th>Individual Survey Respondents English</th>
<th>Individual Survey Respondents Vietnamese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38% (n=155)</td>
<td>40% (n=61)</td>
<td>25% (n=3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>15</sup> Based on World Bank’s (2011) Gross National Index- 2008.
Higher Education Institution Representatives

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APQN Member Organizations</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=117)</td>
<td>(n=63)</td>
<td>(n=5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>407</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7.2. Number of times English version respondents attended APQN events

The reason for the significant association between the membership status and participation at APQN events may be because it is not clear in the marketing of APQN events that the events are open to non-members. Therefore, non-members may not participate as they are not aware of the inclusiveness of these events. In the open-ended comments of the survey, some non-members mentioned an interest in having APQN conferences and workshops open to non-members. No significant differences in APQN event participation is notable by the socio-economic status of the respondent’s country/territory, as evidenced in their Chi-Square values, i.e. $\chi^2 (20, n= 135) = 30.204, p$
Therefore, respondents were more likely to participate in an APQN event if they were a member, regardless of the wealth of their country/territory.

**Sponsors for individual participation in APQN events.**

Most of the funding for participation in an APQN event came from the respondent’s organization, as Figure 7.3 demonstrates. Of those who chose to answer the question, “Who sponsored your participation in these events?”, 69% (n=48) indicated that their organization funded it; 21% (n=15) self-funded their participation; 16% (n=11) were funded by a regional body or by multiple sponsors; 14% (n=10) were funded by an international organization; and only 1% (n=1) were funded by another organization in their country/territory. In the open ended comment section for the multiple sponsors, four respondents mentioned that the APQN sponsored their participation.

Since there is an association between APQN membership and the number of times the respondent participated in an APQN event, it is probable that member organizations are more likely to sponsor participation of their employees than non-member organizations.

![Figure 7.3. Sponsors of APQN events for English version respondents](image-url)
Dissemination of knowledge gained from APQN activities.

Although 74 of the survey respondents reported they attended at least one APQN event, 134 answered the question “To what extent have you gained the following from APQN events and activities?” By the nature of the responses, it is clear that APQN activities are reaching a wider audience than APQN events. Of all the questions asked in this survey, the answers related to the dissemination of knowledge and/or knowledge gained from APQN activities offered the most significant responses.

Overall, the survey respondents mostly agreed that the knowledge gained from APQN activities is being shared within their country/territory. 42% (n=61) agreed and 17% (n=25) disagreed with the statement “The knowledge gained via APQN activities is shared among organizations within my country/territory.”

There is a significant association between the socio-economic status of the respondents’ country and their opinions about whether knowledge gained from APQN activities is shared, as indicated by the Chi-square statistic, $\chi^2 (20, n=146) = 39.809$, $p < .05$. In order to understand the association between the socio-economic status of the

![Figure 7.4. English version respondents opinions about sharing knowledge gained from APQN activities](image)
country/territory and the opinions about dissemination of knowledge gained from APQN activities, I compared the means of the opinions by socio-economic status. Lower means show greater agreement with the statement. Higher means show that there is greater disagreement with it\footnote{Strongly agree = 1, agree = 2, neutral = 3, disagree = 4, strongly disagree = 5, don’t know = 6.}. Table 7.4 shows that those from lower middle income and lower income countries/territories tend to more favorably agree that knowledge gained from APQN activities is being disseminated in their country/territory, with an average means of 2.70 and 2.78. These answers show that the countries/territories towards which the APQN’s QA capacity building activities are mostly aimed—at lower and lower middle income countries—are sharing knowledge gained within the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Territory Socio-Economic Status</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-Income</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-Middle Income</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower-Middle Income</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.638</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Membership status also plays a role in the opinions about whether knowledge gained from APQN events and activities is being shared in the country. A Pearson Chi-square test between membership status and the opinions about knowledge being disseminated within the country shows that a significant association also exists $\chi^2 (5, n=139) = 19.025, p = .002$. Table 7.5 compares the means of member and non-members and demonstrates that those who are from member organizations were more agreeable than non-members about the statement that knowledge gained from APQN activities is being shared within the country.
Table 7.5 Comparison of Means of the Ranked Opinions about APQN Knowledge Gained by Member Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member Status</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.532</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Member</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.627</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Bateman and Giles (2008) study reported that 90% of the members sponsored by the APQN to attend events agreed that knowledge gained from APQN events was being disseminated in the country. This study did not directly ask respondents if they were sponsored by the APQN. The open-ended comments revealed that at least four respondents were sponsored, which is not enough to draw a strong comparison. To provide a rough comparison to the Bateman and Giles (2008) survey, Figure 7.4 shows that the member’s opinions, those sponsored and not sponsored by the APQN, agree (not as strongly) that knowledge gained from APQN events is shared within their country/territory. It is not surprising that the Bateman and Giles (2008) survey received more agreeable responses given that those sponsored to attend an APQN event, may make a greater effort to share the knowledge gained from that event.

**Level of awareness of APQN activities in the respondents’ country/territory.**

According to the respondents of this survey, the level of awareness of APQN activities is still not high. When asked to indicate the degree of awareness of APQN activities in their country, as illustrated in Figure 7.5, respondents had a neutral to low opinion, which means that the overall opinion from QA professionals in Asia and the Pacific is that there is not a high level of awareness of APQN activities. No significant difference in the level of awareness of APQN activities is notable by either socio-economic status of the respondent’s country or the member status, as evidenced in their Chi-Square values, i.e. $\chi^2(20, n=134)=20.596, p=.421; \chi^2(5,n=139)=6.136, p=.293$, respectively.

Comparing this question with the previous one about knowledge gained from APQN activities is being disseminated in the respondent’s country/territory, implies that knowledge is being disseminated among member organizations. The level of awareness
of APQN activities is therefore limited to its membership. More marketing could be done to extend the level of awareness of APQN activities beyond the membership.

![Figure 7.5. English version respondents opinions about level of awareness of APQN activities in respondents’ country/territory](image)

n=139

**Figure 7.5. English version respondents opinions about level of awareness of APQN activities in respondents’ country/territory**

The Bateman and Giles (2008) study indicated 74% of sponsored members believing that there was an awareness of APQN activities in their country/territory, which is more positive than this survey indicates. Figure 7.5 shows that only 32% (n=20) of the respondents from member organizations believed that there was an awareness of the APQN within their country/territory. The discrepancy between this survey and the Bateman and Giles (2008) report may be due to the objective of the two surveys. The respondents of the Bateman and Giles (2008) survey knew that it was intended to evaluate the APQN, and therefore some sufficing may have occurred with the responses in order to provide favorable responses to the APQN’s capacity building efforts and the use of the World Bank’s DGF funds.

The results of my survey demonstrate that the APQN does not have much influence at the national level. The neutrality of the answers about the knowledge gained at APQN events and activities being disseminated in the respondents countries/territories
and the level of awareness of APQN events and activities shows that at this point in time the APQN has room for extending its outreach in the region.

**Opinions about possible benefits of APQN activities and events.**

Survey participants were given seven possible types of information gained from APQN events and activities and were asked to rank each gain. The ranking of possible benefits of APQN activities and events illustrates that the survey respondents had a strong focus on international collaboration. As Figure 7.6 shows, survey respondents believed the most beneficial aspect of APQN activities and events was learning international practices of QA. Alternatively the lack of networking with others in the respondent’s geographical region also shows a weak regional focus of the survey respondents. A reason for the weak ranking of networking with others in the respondent’s geographical region may be because this type of activity may happen more frequently at events rather than through activities of the APQN.
Figure 7.6. English version respondents’ ranking of possible benefits of APQN events and activities
Pearson chi-square tests were run between the socio-economic status of the respondent’s country and the opinions about the gains from APQN events and activities. The tests found that of the seven gains listed, as Table 7.6 illustrates, only one association can be made between socio-economic status of the respondent’s country and the gains from APQN events and activities. This gain, understanding how to implement QA, has a statistically significant association, which corroborates with the question about knowledge gained from APQN events being disseminated within the country/territory.

**Table 7.6 Chi-square Tests for Opinions about Possible Benefits to APQN Events and Activities and Socio-Economic Status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Benefit</th>
<th>Pearson χ²</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I understood how to implement QA</td>
<td>Pearson χ² (Valid cases=127)</td>
<td>23.163</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned about QA policymaking and reform</td>
<td>Pearson χ² (Valid cases=127)</td>
<td>13.213</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned about other QA training opportunities</td>
<td>Pearson χ² (Valid cases=126)</td>
<td>10.683</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned about other QA training opportunities</td>
<td>Pearson χ² (Valid cases=125)</td>
<td>18.808</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned about international practices of QA</td>
<td>Pearson χ² (Valid cases=126)</td>
<td>13.166</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I exchanged ideas with QA experts</td>
<td>Pearson χ² (Valid cases=123)</td>
<td>16.393</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned techniques for overcoming challenges with QA in our national system</td>
<td>Pearson χ² (Valid cases=126)</td>
<td>20.944</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.051</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To explain this association, a comparison of means in Table 7.7 shows that those from high income and upper middle income countries felt that they understood how to implement QA and did not learn from an APQN event or activity. Conversely, it is clear
that those from lower middle countries were more likely to select “a lot” when choosing to what extent they understood how to implement QA as a result of an APQN event or activity. Those from lower income countries had a smaller means than the lower middle income countries. This association between the socio-economic status of the respondent’s country and the extent to which they understood how to implement QA as a result of participating in an APQN event or activity shows that it is fulfilling its mission to build capacity in the region by teaching lower middle and lower income countries how to implement QA. This association also shows that more could be done to reach out to low income countries to make a greater impact. The higher the means, the more agreeable the respondents are to the statement.

**Table 7.7 Comparison of Means for Understanding How to Implement QA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Territory</th>
<th>Socio-Economic Status</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High-Income</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper-Middle Income</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>.957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower-Middle Income</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>124</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**APQN website.**

The APQN website is viewed once a month or more by 53% (n=76) of the survey participants. As revealed in Figure 7.7, 29% of the respondents use the website less than once a month, 8% (n=11) visit it once a year, and 10% (n=14) never use it. A Pearson chi-square test shows that there is no association between member status and use of the website, nor between the socio-economic status of the respondent’s country and use of the website. The lack of association between member status and the socio-economic status of the respondent’s country demonstrates that 1) membership status does not drive users to the website, and 2) the socio-economic status of a country does not inhibit access to the website. These results illustrate that the APQN website is accessible to QA professionals interested in Asia and the Pacific regardless of their membership status or countries wealth.
These survey results also show that the APQN website has room for growth. Although the most recent report of the usage of the website has increased exponentially, there is still room for growth.

**Information used on the APQN website.**

Survey participants were asked to identify the information on the APQN website that they used. The answer choices were: 1) events calendar, 2) expert database, 3) conference proceedings, 4) workshop materials, and 5) other. Downloading conference proceedings was the most popular usage of the APQN website. When asked to select the information that respondents used on the APQN website, conference proceedings (63%, n=79), the events calendar (54%, n=68) and workshop materials (47%, n=59) were widely used among the participants as Figure 7.8 illustrates.
These results show that the APQN is a resource for QA professionals interested in Asia and the Pacific, particularly in learning about QA research, policy, and training.

**Members-only website.**

Of the 62 survey respondents who self-identified as being from APQN member organizations, the members-only website is used less frequently than the portion of the website available to non-members. As Figure 7.8 shows, 39% (n=24) of the respondents visit the members-only section more than once a month, 18% (n=11) use it less than once a month, 18% (n=11) don’t use the section, 16% (n=10) were unaware of the section, and 10% (n=6) use it once a year. The exclusive access to certain sections of the website may not be providing the value-added dimension that the Board intended when it created the members-only section of the website a few years ago.

**Figure 7.8. Information on the APQN website used by English version respondents**
Reasons for becoming APQN members.

At the end of the survey, an open-ended question was asked of the APQN members for why they became an APQN member. Based on the open-ended comments, it is evident that the APQN is many things to many types of organizations, institutions, and individuals. It is mainly seen as a platform for understanding QA in higher education in the region. QA agencies and networks use it for information sharing. Institutions use it to understand the QA process in order to improve teaching and learning. Regional and world organizations use it as a way to bring agencies and ministries of education together to agree upon mutual frameworks of recognition. Industry looks at it as a way to understand the higher education market in Asia and the Pacific. There were five main themes or reasons for why the respondent and/or their organization is interested in the APQN: 1) the perceived influence of the APQN, 2) the contributions it has made to the region, 3) interest in the APQN’s possible role in higher education regionalization, 4) its connection to other networks, and 5) national agendas drive their interest.
The perceived influence of the APQN as a “worldwide organization” was one of the reasons why respondents were interested in it. There were some surprising connections to Australia; one respondent considered the APQN an “umbrella organization for AUQA” and another stated “…we’re interested in how the APQN can contribute to QA in the region—how Australian universities can contribute to enhancing QA in the region through the APQN.”

A main theme running through most of the comments had to do with the quality of higher education in the region. This respondent summarized these sentiments well:

I am very concerned about some of the practices in teaching and learning in many Asian countries…..I was hoping that APQN would be the engine that would make Asian higher education realizes this very need to transform. To some extent some incipient moves have begun, but APQN being (in many senses) a voluntary organization that its impact has been limited.

Many of the comments mentioned how the APQN is in a position for “influencing the regional agenda for QA professional development and advocacy.”

The contributions the APQN has made to the region are mainly related to it providing a platform for sharing ideas and for benchmarking. As a platform for sharing ideas, one comment stated “We believe APQN enhances communication between the heads of the QA agencies of different countries and provides a forum for discussion and sharing of knowledge.” The notion of the APQN being a benchmark for countries, as well as for other networks, also came out in these two quotes: “It gives one the opportunity to get acquainted with higher education systems in other countries, and an opportunity to see the differences, and what one has or lacks in one’s own country” and “The APQN is a benchmark of other networks around the world.” International and regional dimensions of the APQN’s capacity building activities also came out in comments such as:

APQN network is useful for experience sharing and learning international practices in quality assurance.

APQN provides a global overview of QA practices and trends in the region, which can be utilized as consideration in QA implementation and policymaking.

…APQN is well-known in the circle of quality assurance of higher education and it can provide an opportunity for us to know the status quo of quality assurance in the area of Asia Pacific.
The contributions of the APQN are largely attributed to connecting the national, regional, and international dimensions of QA policymaking and practice.

The possible role the APQN could play in higher education regionalization also was apparent in the open-ended comments related to why the respondent and/or their organization are interested in the APQN. A respondent who worked for the international division of their organization (the name of which has been omitted to protect anonymity), commented:

I work in the international division of the [name of department]. My role is to engage in educational cooperation with multilateral organizations such as APEC and SEAMEO...Raising awareness of QA, qualification framework and qualification recognition is a platform for engagement in the region. APQN is a stakeholder and plays a key role in that space.

Although the textual analysis and key informant interviews do not indicate a strong regional identity of the APQN, the survey respondents had a different feeling. Many of them commented on the role the APQN can play in the region in terms of building cooperation. One respondent noted that his or her interest in the APQN was because of its “Support for regional networks and capacity building…but [I am also] interested as part of good regional citizenship.”

The APQN’s connection to other networks as the reason why survey respondents are interested in the APQN is apparent in the above comments. A respondent who appears to have experiences with the APQN expressed their concern about it being a network for bureaucrats and not professionals:

The APQN could be a very active institution in networking with the professionals in the region. At present it is just a network of national institutions NOT a network of practitioners and professionals. In developing countries, there is need to develop social networks of professionals NOT the bureaucrats.

This comment can be interpreted in many different ways. The distinction between professionals and bureaucrats, and the reference to “national institutions” may be related to the majority of QA agencies in the region as being part of the government, and not independent agencies. In this comment, “professionals” may be those who are interested in QA, or who may do research on QA and sit outside of the government. The comment
depicts the perception that QA can either become a bureaucratic beast or a professional tool for advancement.

The national agendas that drive interest in the APQN are related mostly to national development and international practices. In the comments related to national agendas driving the interest in the APQN, credibility and recognition was important. Providing a way to become credible within the region was a reason for membership in the APQN. The following two quotes sum up the expectation that the APQN provides credibility and recognition for APQN members:

It is a platform to communicate with the counterparts in the region, and it can show that my agency is creditable and professional.

We would like to gain additional international recognition for our organization through membership in the APQN.

Survey Respondents’ Suggested APQN Capacity Building Activities

At the end of the survey, an open-comment question was asked “What type of capacity building activities would you like the APQN to consider implementing in the future?” Most of the comments relate to activities the APQN is currently providing: training workshops and online courses specifically related to internal QA and external QA, internship programs, and staff exchanges. There were four main roles the respondents felt the APQN could play: 1) advocacy, 2) information gathering and dissemination, 3) training and mentoring, and 4) institutional initiatives. There were also several comments about ways in which the APQN could engage in internationalization and regionalization activities.

The comments related to the APQN as advocate had local to global themes worth mentioning. As this chapter has demonstrated, a local dimension in the APQN’s work is lacking, and was noted in this comment: “QA approaches [need to be] based on local needs.” Another similar comment mentioned “How to conduct peer reviews within a different cultural context…” Other comments wanted the APQN’s help in negotiating with governments, or in working “[t]o bring equal education standards in all over the world.”
Respondents wished to further the APQN’s capacity for information gathering and dissemination involving more online components, including live webinars and video presentations, and including more “best practices”. The interest in information was more internationally focused than regionally or nationally focused, as this comment shows in the list of activities the APQN should do: “1. Disseminate international QA practice and experience 2. Networking international QA practitioners and experts 3. Research on QA theory and comparative study.”

Possible training and mentoring activities involved including non-members in workshops and experience sharing activities, creating certificate or diploma programs, and a mentoring service. There was also interest in opening up membership to individual members.

Institutional initiatives were not mentioned as often as the percentage of respondents from higher education institutions would suggest. Institutional initiatives that some of the respondents would like to see were discipline-based QA and “[m]ore subsidized training opportunities for faculty members of member institutions.”

Internationalization efforts that the APQN should engage in included identifying common international standards, facilitating the expansion of international external reviewers for audit and accreditation systems, and sharing “best practices” of international actors (not just regional actors). International recognition of academic programs was also something that one respondent felt the APQN could help facilitate. Although the respondents had a clear international focus, there were more comments related to regionalization efforts than to internationalization efforts.

Regionalization efforts that the APQN should engage in include collecting information about QA policies and initiatives nationally and regionally, supporting mutual recognition initiatives, and offering comparisons between countries/territories and institutions in the region. One respondent wanted the APQN “To be the authority on definition of terms used in QA to ensure common understanding which could enhance national and regional practices.” The survey responses show that the QA professionals interested in Asia and the Pacific see the APQN as fulfilling its mission to build QA capacity in the region, while at the same time expecting it to showcase international QA norm-setting activities that can further regional harmonization.
The survey illustrates that the APQN is meeting the capacity building needs of its members from low income and lower middle income countries, while at the same time providing all of its members the opportunity to learn about international QA developments. The open-ended questions, similar to the key informant interviews, express a national focus, which is to be expected given the professional roles that most of the key informants and survey respondents hold. What the survey respondents share that did not come out in the textual analysis or the key informant interviews is an interest to create a regional identity, or the need to apply QA norms to local contexts. The survey, more than the other forms of data collection, suggests that the APQN should exhibit higher education regionalization as a regional form of internationalization.

The focus in the open-ended responses on the national level and the participation of the APQN within national policymaking contexts might suggest a shifting of emphasis from international to national particularities of QA. Yet at this time, given the majority of comments about international and regional information sharing, also demonstrates that the APQN is considered a disseminator of international QA norms, and its regional identity, at this point is more geographical than cultural or political.

**APQN’s Version of Higher Education Regionalization**

The data presented in these two chapters on the APQN indicate that regional identity is defined in reference to participating in international discussions. It is a generic identity right now that is not asserting any values or positions derived from indigenous epistemological roots. Since the APQN lacks a clear regional identity, and based on the evidence necessary for the APQN to reflect higher education regionalization as a regional version of internationalization as articulated in Table 2.2, it can’t be a regional version of internationalization. At the present, the APQN tends to be representing the ideal-type of higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization, with the potential of asserting a regional identity once it matures. The national focus of the key informants and the open-ended comments of the survey may point to the APQN’s example of higher education regionalization as a regional version of internationalization in the future.

The values constructed by the APQN relate more to the needs for developing countries to not get left behind in the higher education global marketplace. The interest of
the stronger higher education systems to partner with the weaker systems in the region to
expand their markets, also confirms its form of higher education regionalization as a sub-
set of globalization. In other words, the focus on opening up the state’s provision of
higher education to the global marketplace is a clear indication of globalization. The role
of the APQN in fostering this development supports a global market focus, rather than an
inter-national focus, which is another indicator of higher education regionalization as a
sub-set of globalization.

The events and activities of the APQN fit mostly within the liberal internationalist
perspectives of globalization, with neo-liberal and institutional reformer ideas discussed
frequently; however, there are clearly global transformers, state/protectionists and
radicals within the APQN.

The APQN’s liberal internationalist values focus on international cooperation and
harmonization, as can be seen in the textual analysis. The state and the market are
emphasized in the alignment to other countries/territories with the MOUs and MOCs as
well as the publications such as the Toolkit and the Chiba Principles. The key informant
interviews highlight the collaborative nature of the membership and the focus on
international practices. In the online survey, the significant association to the
respondents’ countries socio-economic status and whether knowledge gained from
APQN events was being disseminated also showed an interest in aligning QA practices
with other countries/territories.

At this point in time, the APQN is a two-way street for discussions between
international-to-national and national-to-international actors, with more traffic on the
international-to-national side of the street. The interplay between the market, state, and
academy seems to be weighted by the APQN more on the market and state side than on
the academy side.
Chapter Eight: Việt Nam and the Asia Pacific Quality Network

Knowledge is the greatest asset of the nation. (1466)

Memoir of the Stele of Doctors at the Temple of Literature, Ha Noi, Việt Nam

The previous chapters suggest that the APQN’s attraction for international observers is its ability to reach national members, while at the same time allowing national members to share regional perspectives at international discussions (regional-to-international), implying that the APQN is a bridge between national and international QA professionals and organizations. This chapter on Việt Nam’s experiences with QA development and its relationship with the APQN, other regional bodies, and international organizations highlights a strong tendency for Vietnamese QA policymakers and practitioners to use the APQN as a bridge to advance their higher education system for regional and international competition.

Over the past sixty-five years, Việt Nam has undergone significant educational and economic transformation. In 1945, 95% of the adult population was illiterate (Hac, 1995); today statistics state that illiteracy is less than 10% (CIA, 2011; UNESCO, 2011a). Before the global economic crisis of 2008, Goldman Sachs considered Việt Nam one of the “Next Eleven” economies with promising foreign investment opportunities (O’Neill, Wilson, Purushothaman, & Stupnytska, 2005). After 2008, Việt Nam has struggled with high inflation, a trade deficit, and a large amount of foreign loans (CIA, 2011). The economic climate does not seem to be affecting enrollment in the higher education system, with more than 1.7 million students in the system; however, this enrollment is still only 16% of the college-aged cohort (UNESCO, 2007a). The high inflation rate and the large amount of foreign investment in the country are affecting the higher education system. In order to advance the higher education system, the Socialist Republic of Việt Nam (SRV) aims to “renovate” and modernize its system through state-centric polices and reforms.

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17 This passage on one of the stelae of doctors at the Temple of Literature has been quoted in a few articles on Vietnamese higher education also cited in (Duggan, 2001; Nguyen, 2009).
History of Higher Education in Việt Nam

Việt Nam has experienced several periods of occupation by China, France, Japan, and the United States. Russia has also play an influential role in Việt Nam’s universities, with many faculty and policymakers receiving their education in Russia. In each colonial experience, up to the present, Việt Nam has maintained an elite higher education system.

Higher education has had a long tradition in Việt Nam. During the Chinese occupation (207 BCE – 938 CE), Chinese schools were established for Chinese dignitaries and high-achieving Vietnamese students. During the Tang dynasty (618 – 907 CE), Vietnamese were allowed to take the competitive imperial examination in Beijing to be part of the civil service (Hac, 1995). Since gaining independence from China, in 938 CE, Buddhist and Confucian institutes of learning continued to evolve in Việt Nam. Other Confucian-heritage societies, such as China and Singapore that have harnessed strong socio-cultural values attached to higher education, can provide examples to Việt Nam of how it may successfully advance its higher education system (Marginson, 2011).

The imperial examination system, instituted by the Chinese, tied Confucian texts closely to the values of education. The first university in Việt Nam, established in 1076, was an Imperial Academy, known as Quốc Tử Giám. It was connected to a Confucian Temple called Văn Miếu, or Temple of Literature. This university existed for more than 700 years, graduating thousands of doctoral students (Sloper & Le, 1995). According to Confucian values, the scholar has an elevated status in society. Social mobility is possible to those who are strong academics. These values continued to underpin Vietnamese higher education during the French occupation almost a millennium after Confucian values were introduced in Việt Nam (Hac, 1995; H. Hayden, 1967). Even during the French occupation (1858 - 1954), literary competitions modeled after the Chinese system were conducted in order to rank civil servants (Cima, 1987).

The 1917 Education Act declared by France abolished the feudal Confucian system, put an end to the civil service examination, and stopped the teaching of the Chinese script (Hac, 1995). The French reformed the Vietnamese schooling system to be patterned after its own system and introduced professional (i.e. vocational) education (Hac, 1995). After elementary school, students could go into two tracks, 1) a technical track that led to vocational training at the secondary level, or 2) an academic track that
eventually led to higher education. The vocational track also allowed students access to higher education, through the professional colleges (Hac, 1995). Several colleges, particularly teachers colleges, veterinary colleges, and law schools, were created during this time. A strong emphasis is still placed on professional higher education. The French rationale for this change was to provide training for needed human resources (Hac, 1995).

The division of North and South Việt Nam by the Geneva Accord, after the end of the French occupation in 1954, and the subsequent American involvement in maintaining South Việt Nam, had a significant impact on the education system. During the almost 20-year period when the regions were separated, two different education systems developed. After reunification and reconstruction, it took almost two decades to integrate the two systems (Hac, 1995). True to core socialist ideology, in 1982 the constitution stated that every citizen had the right to having a K-12 education; however, inefficient state-socialist economic institutions and poor integration led to further poverty and the decline of the education system (London, 2006).

In 1986, the government decided to move from a communist-style planned economy to a socialist market economy, called the Đổi Mới. The Đổi Mới was intended to decentralize administration responsibilities, and restructure or “renovate” the education system (Duggan, 2001). During the 1990s, the government set out to strategically plan educational development activities in order to link education to economic development (Hac, 1995). Part of this restructuring included adding school fees to post-primary school education (reversing the constitution’s declaration of providing free education), thus effectively requiring families to share the costs of secondary and higher education (London, 2006). In 1998, the government enlisted World Bank support through its first Higher Education Project (1998 – 2007) to further expand its higher education system.

Present Status of the Higher Education System

The plan to expand enrollment in higher education seems to have worked. In 1992, higher education enrollment totaled 162,000 students (Hac, 1995)\(^\text{18}\). The system now has approximately 1.7 million students (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2009). In

\(^{18}\) In 1992 the college-aged cohort would have been students who were born at the end of the civil war and had most of their education during a time of great upheaval in the system.
terms of geographical distribution, 40 of 63 provinces have at least one university, and 62 out of 63 provinces have a college (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2009). In 2009, 26.3% of the total enrollment was from economically disadvantaged regions; 4.7% of the enrollment was made up of minority students, and 51.6% of the overall enrollment were women (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2009). The rate of students going outside of Việt Nam to enroll in higher education is increasing more rapidly than the rate of students enrolling in higher education in the country; however, the outbound student population is less than 2% of the college-aged cohort. (UIS, 2009, p. 38).

Within the last decade, universities have gone from being smaller and offering more specialized programs to becoming multi-disciplinary institutions. There exist three types of universities: multidisciplinary, specialized, and open\(^{19}\) (Varghese, 2007). The multi-disciplinary institutions are beginning to dominate the system, including fourteen government-designated “key” universities (Mark Hayden & Thiep, 2006). The multidisciplinary universities are either national or regional; multidisciplinary universities offer doctoral education (IIE-Vietnam, 2004). Việt Nam currently has 376 higher education institutions, 54 of which are under MOET’s direct control (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2009).

The SRV set a goal to enroll three to four million students\(^{20}\) by 2020 (Varghese, 2007). The Socio-Economic Development Plan 2006-2010 proposed to increase enrollment such that by 2010, there are 200 students enrolled in post-secondary education for every 10,000 people. This has already been achieved (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2006a, p. 82). Also, as part of the Development Plan, the SRV intends to increase spending to 20% of the total State budget expenditure towards education, science and technology in order to become industrialized by 2020 (MOET, 2004; Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2006a). The projected total state expenditure for 2011 is 725.6 trillion VND, and the expected spending for education, science, and technology is 146.54 trillion VND, which is 20%. MOET expects to receive 5.04 trillion VND ($USD 258 million on

\(^{19}\) Open universities in Vietnam are still a copy of the ordinary multidisciplinary university, with open universities allowing students to come from different academic tracks (Key informant: MOE3).

\(^{20}\) In order to enroll three to four million students by 2020, the education system must have enough eligible students that can feed into the system. According to UNESCO’s (2009) Global Education Digest, in 2007, there were 9.85 million students enrolled in secondary education. To achieve this goal, 30% of these students would have to complete upper secondary education and enroll in higher education.
January 1, 2011), which is less than 1% of the total state budget (Hanh, 2010; Hoanh, 2010).

Private higher education serves between 12-14% of the total number of students enrolled in higher education (Pham, 2006; Phu, 2006; UNESCO, 2007a). The Higher Education Reformation Agenda, which will be discussed in the textual analysis section of this chapter, intends to have private higher education responsible for about 40% of student enrollment in higher education by 2020 (Varghese, 2007). Currently 21.5% of the higher education system is made up of private (the government calls these “non-public”) institutions (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2009). There are three types of private higher education institutions: semi-public, people-founded, and private (Phuong, 2006). The financing of these institutions and the cost shared by the student ranges from 100% privately funded to 100% publicly funded (for some minority and poor students). With the expansion of Việt Nam’s economy, more and more families are able and willing to pay for higher education tuition. In an environment with limited governmental resources, private higher education is seen as a way to open up higher education to more students, particularly those from well-off families.

Rapid expansion of the Vietnamese higher education system presents serious challenges to maintaining, or striving, for a level of quality. The danger of private higher education is the potential for weak instruction and poor academic quality, which has been acknowledged in the Development Plan. Because of these challenges, the government, with World Bank funding, has initiated QA policies. The Development Plan proposes QA solutions to the challenge of poor quality private (non-public) higher education, including encouraging private institutions to cooperate with foreign institutions and to gradually apply “…standards and criteria used by developed countries to the educational quality assessment of a number of specific fields” as well as to “…prepare to join the international educational quality accreditation system (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2006a, p. 84)”.

There is a paradox in how the SRV is going about reforming the higher education system. Like many Asian and post-Soviet governments, SRV follows a state-centric structure for steering its higher education system towards goals of economic advancement (George, 2006), but introduces neo-liberal market-oriented policies that
should in theory reduce government regulation and control. Examples of state-centric steering of the higher education system includes curriculum, the entrance exam, control over the number of students universities can accept, the number of degrees awarded, and even the paper on which the degrees are printed. Although neo-liberal market-oriented policies have introduced private higher education into a system that has traditionally been made up of state public institutions with the intention of creating a competitive market, the state mechanisms that control the system have not changed. Opening up the system to private higher education was meant to introduce competition into it; however, with the current highly bureaucratic management process, which includes a QA component, both weak and strong private higher education institutions are having difficulties entering the higher education “market” (Pham, 2006; Phuong, 2006).

Việt Nam’s partnership with the World Bank in renovating its higher education system, signals a clear market-orientation, placing QA initiatives in neo-liberal or liberal institutional paradigms, while at the same time, a lingering statist paradigm is seen in the state-centric higher education policies.

**Bi-lateral and Regional Partnerships**

The Vietnamese government has secured support from bi-lateral, regional, and international donors to develop a QA scheme. In 2006, the Agency of Examinations and Quality Evaluations of the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) temporarily contracted the support of the Netherlands’ Association of Universities to assist in the evaluation of Vietnamese universities (Tre, 2007). Some of the key informants had participated in these bi-lateral projects with NUFFIC and AUQA (through APQN contacts).

Vietnamese representatives participate in regional discussions about best practices of QA in Southeast Asia in meetings with regional organizations. The three main sub-regional organizations with QA capacity building projects are 1) ASEAN, 2) AUN, and 3) SEAMEO. In these meetings, representatives share their experiences of developing and implementing QA policies, as well as contribute to the regional discussion of finding

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21 Most key informants from universities described that between 50-60% of the curriculum was controlled by MOET. I could not verify this percentage in my textual analysis, but MOET key informants also confirmed that MOET controlled the “main curriculum”.
commonalities among the Southeast Asian Nations to establish overarching regional principles of QA (Ha, 2009, 2010). A brief overview of these organizations is necessary to understand how these organizations contribute to QA capacity building in Việt Nam.

**Partnership with APQN.**

In 2006 and 2007, the APQN hosted training sessions in Hanoi and Ho Chí Minh City on external and internal QA. Funding for these meetings came from the APQN’s access to the World Bank’s DGF, the MOET, and individual universities. One of the outcomes of the first training sessions was the connection with Ton Vroeijenstijn, who was the facilitator. The participants at this APQN meeting shared their work on the AUN-QA Task Force with Dr. Vroeijenstijn who was very encouraging of this project. Later that year, Dr. Vroeijenstijn was sponsored by HRK German Rector’s Conference as a consultant to the AUN-QA to help write the *AUN-QA Implementation Manual* (2007).

**Association for Southeast Asian Nations.**

ASEAN was formed in 1968 in order to pull resources together to protect these small low-income countries from the Cold War and further colonization. Originally starting with six countries, ASEAN now includes 10 countries from SE Asia\(^{22}\), and often invites the three East Asian tigers: China, Korea, and Japan, as well as former Commonwealth countries: Australia, India and New Zealand to join their meetings. In looking at ASEAN’s practices, Stubbs (2008) argues that it has developed its own style of international relations, which includes an emphasis on national autonomy and informal, cooperative decision making. Although it was just a tiny trade organization with little trade power in the 1960s and 1970s, ASEAN wields more and more power in its ability to attract and involve such economic powerhouses as China and Japan. ASEAN’s initiatives in higher education mainly focus on mutual recognition agreements between its countries. These agreements currently focus on professional training of engineers, nurses, architects, accountants, dentists, and medical practitioners (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c). The ASEAN name

\(^{22}\)Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Việt Nam.
has been adopted by many networks, which may or may not be directly connected to ASEAN. Two of those networks are the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN) and the ASEAN University Network.

**ASEAN quality assurance network.**

The ASEAN Quality Assurance network was established in 2008 by many of the APQN member organizations in Southeast Asia. The APQN Board members from Southeast Asia are also on the AQAN Board. AQAN’s mission is similar to APQN’s mission with a focus strictly on Southeast Asia; however, AQAN aims to develop a regional quality assurance framework (ASEAN Quality Assurance Network, 2011a). The General Department of Educational Training and Assessment (GDETA), as the QA agency in Vietnam, is the only Vietnamese member of AQAN.

**ASEAN university network.**

The ASEAN Network of Universities (AUN), an institutionally driven organization, is one of several nodes in the greater ASEAN network. The AUN was established in 1995 by those responsible for higher education in six of the ASEAN countries, as well as by the top universities of each of these countries (ASEAN University Network, 1995). There are 26 participating universities of AUN, from all of the ASEAN countries. Việt Nam University (VNU) Hanoi and VNU Ho Chi Minh City are the two universities from Việt Nam.

AUN’s strategic focus is to facilitate regional cooperation by developing a Southeast Asian studies interdisciplinary program, cooperative regional MA and PhD programs, regional research projects, and a visiting professor program (ASEAN University Network, 2010). There are six sub-networks of the AUN, related to engineering education, business and economics, and intellectual property and two task forces, one on information networking and the other on university quality assurance (AUN-QA).

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23 Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand.
**AUN-QA.**

The AUN-QA was established in 1998 to build QA networking in the sub-region. It saw QA as “…an instrument for mutual recognition to and respect of differences among individual institutions including their diversified cultural and basic resources (ASEAN University Network, 2010, p. 2).” Since 1998, AUN-QA has created several guidelines for good practices in QA. The intention of these guidelines is to establish QA practices in each country by the member institutions (often considered the top institutions) that can thereby model good practices to the other universities, and possibly to QA policymakers. Many of the participants in the AUN-QA are also members of the APQN. In fact, AUN is now an observer of APQN.

**SEAMEO.**

The Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) started a year before ASEAN, in 1965, to foster communication and dialogue across ministries of education in the SE Asian region. There were five initial members. It currently has 11 members, including Timor-Leste. The regional center that focuses on QA in higher education is known as SEAMEO-RIHED, based in Bangkok, Thailand. It was one of the sponsors of the 2010 APQN Annual Conference.

**SEAMEO-RIHED.**

The Regional Initiative for Higher Education Development (RIHED) started separately from SEAMEO as a joint venture between UNESCO, the International Association for Universities and the Ford Foundation. In 1970, it was formally established in Singapore with seven member states; however by 1985 it had become inactive because some members couldn’t contribute funding for its activities. At that time, the Board of Directors decided to move the offices to Thailand and sought permission of SEAMEO to be subsumed under its governance structure. In 1992, formal approval was finally granted by the Thai government to host RIHED as an institution under SEAMEO. In partnership with the Malaysian Qualifications Authority, SEAMEO-RIHED helped found the ASEAN Quality Assurance Network (AQAN). The AQAN
Board met at the APQN meeting in Bangkok to discuss an ASEAN Qualifications Framework.

These sub-regional organizations are not just joining together individual countries, but they also network with each other. In June 2010, AQAN, SEAMEO-RIHED, and AUN met to discuss how the three agencies can cooperate together to support the QA agencies in SE Asia (ASEAN Quality Assurance Network, 2011b). The first step was established to engage the national QA agencies to present a plan of work necessary to move ahead with their QA policies and practices.

World Bank Projects: “Support for an Incremental Paradigm Shift”

Since 1998, there have been six World Bank projects and an International Finance Corporation (IFC) project related to higher education in Việt Nam. QA was introduced in the first HEP project through the work component on “Capacity building and institutional development” (World Bank, 2008a). Part of this component included consultation by Marjorie Peace Lenn, who wrote a report for the World Bank in 2004 on the status of QA in Asia and the Pacific (Vietnam.03.12.09.MOET1). Lenn’s initial consultation with MOET through the World Bank may have encouraged the adoption of accreditation practices versus other modes of QA.

The World Bank’s role in Việt Nam’s higher education capacity building is far reaching. The incremental paradigm shift the World Bank is seeking through these projects relates to changing institutional and government traditions embedded in the higher education system. Table 8.1 summarizes the projects, timeframe, status, and main work components.

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24 This quote comes from the title of a PowerPoint presentation given in by Jeffrey Waite (2009), the lead World Bank consultant for the higher education projects in Việt Nam.
Table 8.1 World Bank Higher Education Projects in Việt Nam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
<th>Project Status</th>
<th>Main Work Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Higher Education Project (HEP) | 1998-2007 | Closed | 1) System-level and institutional-level capacity building, institutional development, and computerization  
2) Competitive grants to improve teaching, learning, research, and administration in certain higher education institutions (World Bank, 1998) |
| RMIT Việt Nam | 2002 | | 1) Develop a high-quality western-style university based on RMIT in Australia  
2) Provide degree programs, short-term foreign language training and professional training  
3) Introduce academic programs, QA systems, and professional management, at the level of those offered in Australia (International Finance Corporation, 2011b) |
| TOTAL: $32.1 | | | |
| $7.25 IFC (Senior A loan) | | | |
| $7.25 Asia Development Bank (Senior loan) | | | |
| $17.6 RMIT Australia | | | |
| HEP2 | 2007 - 2012 | Active | 1) Capacity building for policy development in governance, finance, and QA  
2) Development of higher education institutions’ teaching and research capacity through relevance and autonomy (World Bank, 2006) |
| Higher Education Development Policy Program (HEDPP) - First Operation | 2010 | Closed | 1) Draft Government program documents  
2) Monitor and evaluate on-going progress on “agreed upon” policy measures  
3) Collect and submit proof that “agreed upon” policy measures have been met  
4) Monitor Government approval process  
5) Mobilize Government for World Bank missions (World Bank, 2009a) |
| HEDPP – Second Operation | 2011 | Closed | Continue work from HEDPP1 |
| HEDPP – Third Operation | 2012 | Future | Continue work from HEDPP1 & HEDPP2 (World Bank, 2010b) |

25 All World Bank projects include an administrative and management work component as part of its project management practices.
The first World Bank project in higher education, totaling US$83.3 million, intended to update the higher education system. The first Higher Education Project (HEP) focused on mechanisms that would more closely align the higher education system to the market, with goals such as increasing the ability to respond to social and market demands, improving efficiency and resource utilization, and advancing the quality of curriculum, teaching, learning, and research (World Bank, 1998). Upon completion of the first project, which achieved satisfactory results (World Bank, 2008a), the World Bank initiated a second Higher Education Project (HEP2), totaling US$70.5 million. The goals of the second project were to increase the quality of teaching in universities so that graduates are employable and to improve research quality and relevance to Việt Nam’s socio-economic needs (World Bank, 2007b). The QA activities in HEP2 involve adopting a set of minimum quality standards against which higher education institutions will be required to assess themselves, establishing independent accreditation mechanisms to reinforce the minimum standards, and allocating Teaching and Research Improvement Grants on a competitive basis.

In 2002, the IFC, a separate, yet connected institution to the World Bank, initiated a loan to the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in Australia for the establishment of RMIT Việt Nam, a 100% privately owned university, the first of its kind in Việt Nam. The loan was matched by the Asia Development Bank. The aim of this project, similar to the World Bank’s New Model Universities Project, is to offer a western-style university experience for Vietnamese students through the introduction of western-style higher education management practices, academic program development, and QA structures (International Finance Corporation, 2011b). The difference between
this IFC project and the other IDA projects is that the IFC loan is to RMIT, rather than the SVR. SVR offered tax discounts to RMIT, for the first four years RMIT’s profits were tax-free, for the next five years RMIT was to be taxed at 4%, and then after it would be taxed at 10% (Fielden & LaRocque, 2008).

The Higher Education Development Policy Program (HEDPP) and the New-Model Universities Project both started in 2010, and were designed to support the government’s Socio-Economic Development Plan 2006-2010 (World Bank, 2009b). The HEDPP is in three phases, each lasting approximately six months, and each costing US$50 million. The first and second HEDPP operations, which have ended, aimed to strengthen governance, rationalize financing, improve the quality of teaching and research, improve accountability for performance, and enhance transparency in financial management within the higher education sector (World Bank, 2009b). The third operation aims to do the same. The New Model Universities Project, which will tentatively cost $200.7 million dollars, involves developing new models for university governance and quality in teaching and research by enhancing institutional autonomy in two universities (World Bank, 2009c). The pilot projects will be tested at a new Việt Nam-German University in Ho Chi Minh City and by upgrading and reforming Cantho University.

Change is a key objective in all of the World Bank projects. During the first higher education project, it became clear that “capacity was limited at all levels” and “bureaucratic risk aversion slowed the decision making process (World Bank, 2008a, p. 6 & 7).” The incremental paradigm shift for institutional culture is to move from a “passive subsidized approach to a forward looking market approach (World Bank, 2008a, p. 16)”.

Total World Bank and IFC funding aimed at higher education in Việt Nam from 1998 – 2017 is approximately US$ 504.5 million in IDA loans, and $7.25 million in IFC loans. With $258 million USD as the annual budget for MOET, the World Bank is playing a large role in Việt Nam’s higher education capacity building.

GDETA, a department within MOET, is responsible for implementing the QA agenda of the SRV. Based on the World Bank’s recommendations, an accreditation scheme has been put into place, the first step of which is for universities to produce self-evaluation reports as part of the internal review process. The training for conducting and
producing internal and external review processes are mostly financed by HEP2. When I visited GDETA in March 2009, very few self-evaluation reports had been submitted by the universities. By 2010, 16 programs from five national and regional universities had submitted self-evaluation reports, 11 of which had also been externally reviewed (World Bank, 2010d).

**Textual Analysis: QA Policies in Việt Nam**

The following section is based on the textual analysis of government documents I have collected since 2008. As described in Chapter Four, the textual analysis looked at how the objectives and rationales for the higher education system, and QA initiatives, were framed in order to identify underlying values related to globalization. The intent of the textual analysis was to understand how the SRV was positioning itself regionally and internationally.

Important legislation has developed within the past decade, particularly within the past five years, affecting the higher education sector. All of the legislation points to MOET as the central manager of QA, except for foreign institutions and partnerships. Five pieces of legislation from 1998-2005 led to the 2005 Resolution on the Reform of Higher Education and the Higher Education Reform Agenda 2006-2020 (HERA): the 1) 1998 Education Law, 2) the 2001 Education Development Strategies for 2001-2010, the 3) Overseas Study at Home Regulation, the 4) 2003 Guidelines for Dossiers, and the 5) Decree 85-2003-ND-CP on Establishing an Accrediting Department in MOET. Table 8.2 describes these pieces of legislation and their impact on QA in Việt Nam. In 2009, a report on the progress on the 2001-2010 Education Development Strategies referenced a need to grant more institutional autonomy to higher education institutions while increasing accountability regulations (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2009). Legislation developed over the past decade recognizes the global QA movement and the need to develop a QA system that can 1) update and improve the quality of higher education provision to support Việt Nam’s economic development and 2) demonstrate to other countries that Việt Nam’s higher education system meets the necessary levels of quality in order to engage in scholarly exchange and mutual recognition.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legislation</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Impact on QA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998 Education Law, Decision No. 11-1998-QH10 (1998 Education Law, 1998)</td>
<td>Provides regulations for national education system, state agencies, political and socio-political organizations, armed forces, and individuals engaged in educational activities</td>
<td>Links scale of development and expansion of system to quality and efficiency (Art. 9). Selects accreditation, which includes self-evaluation as mode for managing quality, mandates the state to oversee it, and publicly announce results (Art. 14 &amp; 17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Development Strategies, 2001-2010, Decision No. 201-2001 QD-TTG</td>
<td>Identifies key strategies to increase enrollment in higher education, improve the quality of teaching and learning in some disciplines, and mobilize social resources for higher education</td>
<td>Official recognition authorizes resources to be used for improving higher education quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Overseas Study at Home Regulation, Decree 18-2001-ND-CP (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2006b)</td>
<td>Addresses not-for-profit foreign investment for cultural educational institutions, which may or may not be post-secondary credit bearing institutions</td>
<td>MOET responsible “to guide, examine, inspect and evaluate the organization and operation … and publicly announce the results of examination, inspection and/or evaluation. (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2006b, p. Art.28)”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>2003 Guidelines for Dossiers</strong></th>
<th>Details the necessary steps that foreign educational organizations must take to establish offices in Việt Nam, specifically the documents necessary for foreign institutions to open offices, develop partnership institutions, and create independent educational establishments</th>
<th>Assigns the QA responsibilities to the foreign country. Foreign providers are not required to follow a Vietnamese quality assurance scheme. Therefore, MOET does not oversee QA in foreign-sponsored higher education provision in Việt Nam(^{27})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Establishing an Accrediting Department in MOET, Decree 85-2003-ND-CP</strong></td>
<td>Establishes the “functions, powers, duties and organizational structure” within MOET</td>
<td>MOET staff assigned to focus on establishing a centrally governed QA mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2005 Education Law, Law 38-2005-QH11 (2005 Education Law, 2005)</strong></td>
<td>Makes two important changes to the educational system: 1) universal(^{28}) education includes lower secondary school, not just primary school, and 2) schools can only charge for entrance exams and general schooling (Phillips Fox, 2005)</td>
<td>QA mechanisms must be flexible to manage an ever growing educational system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2005 Resolution on the Fundamental and Comprehensive Reform of Higher Education, Decree No. 14-2005-NQ-CP (2005 Resolution)</strong></td>
<td>Links higher education sector more closely with the socio-economic development of the country; to modernize the system by taking national traditions and merging them with international standards, and making cross-sector linkages with teaching, learning, and research assessment</td>
<td>Focus on international QA mechanisms to modernize higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2006 Higher Education Renovation Agenda (Renovation Agenda)</strong></td>
<td>Presents a plan to increase enrollment, improve research capacities, strengthen infrastructure and funding of higher education sector, increase the number of faculty</td>
<td>QA modeled on Chinese, American, and Russian higher education systems, following a fitness for purpose definition of quality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{27}\) A new decree is being written to address this gap in foreign provision QA (Vietnam.03.18.09MOET3).

\(^{28}\) Universal education means access to education for the majority of population in the defined age cohort, but it does not mean that education is fully free. Only primary education is compulsory (Vietnam.03.15.09NM).
The 2005 Resolution on the Fundamental and Comprehensive Reform of Higher Education, Decree No. 14-2005-NQ-CP, and the 2006 Higher Education Renovation Agenda have had the greatest impact on the development of QA. Recognizing the need for change in institutional culture is emphasized within these two higher education policy documents.

2005 Resolution on the fundamental and comprehensive reform of higher education.

The 2005 Resolution on the Fundamental and Comprehensive Reform of Higher Education has a long list of reform initiatives aimed at improving the higher education system. Five of them are to: 1) complete a national network of higher education institutions, 2) build QA and accreditation mechanisms, 3) increase enrollment, reconfiguring the system so that 70-80% of the students are enrolled in vocationally oriented programs and 40% are enrolled in non-public institutions, 4) ensure that by 2010 40% of instructors have master’s degrees and 25% have doctoral degrees, and by 2020, the percentages of master’s and doctoral degrees increase to 60% and 35% respectively, and 5) increase science and technology activities, including income gained from science and technology research (2005 Education Law, 2005). Other goals were made to create a Higher Education Law, to allocate at least 1% of the State budget for institutions to carry out research in accordance with the Science and Technology Law, and to reorganize institutions to have legal autonomy.

The implementation plan includes the cooperation of several sectors, specifically the Ministry of Planning and Investment, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Home, and the Ministry of Science and Technology. The impact of the 2005 Resolution on QA policy development is the emphasis on specialized accreditation for science and technology programs29 and for vocationally-oriented colleges, once institutional

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29 Four of the key informants mentioned training by QA experts who worked for ABET, or training by ABET, to understand its criteria and how to meet its accreditation process.
accreditation policies are implemented. Much of the focus of the 2005 Resolution is on shaping the inputs in the system and the process whereby these inputs are efficiently and effectively used, which is how QA plays an important role. The values driving these initiatives are closely related to the economic progress of the country.

The 2006 higher education renovation agenda.

The 2006 Higher Education Renovation Agenda (MOET, 2006a) includes tasks, budgets, and implementation plans for all actors involved in the development of QA policies and practices. The Renovation Agenda takes the definition of quality as fitness for purpose (MOET, 2006a). According to the Renovation Agenda, between 2006-2010 the terms of authority and establishment for quality centers were to be developed, and legal documents detailing the regulations for institutions were also to be developed (MOET, 2006a, p. 12). By 2010 it was expected that universities, teachers colleges, and distance degree programs for ICT bachelor degrees would be accredited, and graduate schools would have established quality centers (MOET, 2006a). From 2011-2015, the work would expand to include junior colleges and from 2016-2020, a total quality management (TQM) system would be developed.

Currently, universities and the MOET are unprepared to use TQM. However, it is expected that in five years, by 2016, all higher education institutions will have a sophisticated understanding of accreditation and QA and will be able to advance its quality practices. Part of this expectation lies in the effectiveness of the quality centers. Implementing these QA expectations has not been easy. The MOET admits that the quality of higher education has not been managed for several decades and as such it will take a lot of effort to infuse QA management into the system (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2009, p. 8).

To support this change, quality centers have been established in key universities in order to assist with the development and implementation of QA mechanisms.

Quality centers.

Quality centers offer training and workshops to university staff and faculty on how to conduct self-evaluation for the accreditation process. The goal is that eventually
all universities will have quality centers. These centers will become a network that facilitates the internal and external evaluation processes for accreditation. MOET (2009) reports that there are 77 quality centers assisting 114 universities and colleges to perform quality assurance. Quality centers are intended to initiate change the institutional culture of Vietnamese higher education.

MOET officials and university staff, particularly those in the quality centers, have been trained by international consultants brought to Việt Nam by either the APQN, UNESCO, NUFFIC, or have traveled outside the country with World Bank funding to attend workshops by more established QA bodies in the region. Upon their return, trained staff are expected to teach other center and university staff who will be producing the QA reports, particularly the self-evaluation reports. Funding for the training activities has come from numerous sources, like the APQN, but mainly from the two World Bank Higher Education Projects and from the government (MOET, 2006; Vietnam.03.12.09.MOE1).

According to the Renovation Agenda, the purpose of QA and accreditation is to not only to build a quality culture within higher education institutions, but also to increase “social accountability (MOET, 2006b, p. 25)” Social accountability is meant to “keep stakeholders (the State, sponsors, students and their families, academics and other university staff, users of university products and services and other relevant communities) well-informed of university activities (MOET, 2006b, p. 38).” The idea is similar to what UNESCO-IIEP’s online course modules stated in terms of the maturity of the economic system. With mature consumers, the government can rely on the public to hold higher education institutions accountable. Accreditation involves the public reporting of external and internal quality assessments, which would assist the public to participate in this social accountability (MOET, 2006b, p. 38). This notion of social accountability may also be rooted in what London (2006) explains as a political philosophy called socialization, which encourages “all segments of society” to contribute to education. This contribution to education is financial as well as social, and shifts some of these responsibilities away from the government and onto families (London, 2006). This sense of socialization also shifts the responsibilities to private and foreign providers (London, 2010).
Social accountability hasn’t proven to work yet because the public reporting of QA results has not been required. The Statute on Public Transparency established in 2010, requires universities to publicly post their resources dedicated to teaching (curriculum, professional development, and facilities) and research (faculty with PhD degrees) and to publicly report on the institution’s financial expenditures and profit. Even with the public reporting of QA results, the competition in the system is not driven by reputation but rather it’s driven by the number of available seats for students to enter the system. Social accountability works in a mass higher education system where students have the choice of where they enroll. Because there are more students interested in higher education than available spots, relying on the public to hold higher education institutions accountable is unrealistic.

The shifting of costs to households and opening up private higher education fits the neo-liberal perspectives of globalization. Yet, the centralized, bureaucratic control of the education system and the SRV’s Marxist underpinnings highlights strong statist/protectionists tendencies. All of the policies discussed in this chapter show that the SRV is concerned about falling behind in the global economic system and is scrambling to change its higher education system to be more responsive to the market. This intense focus on the market and on initiating partnerships with private and foreign providers would see higher education regionalization as a way to engage with the global economic system through regional partnerships. Participating in networks like the APQN is a way for MOET and Vietnamese higher education institutions to attract donors, learn from others’ experiences, and determine Vietnam’s comparative advantage in the global market. The core values emphasized in the texts are efficiency, flexibility and competition, which are core neo-liberal values.

**APQN Member Organizations**

Việt Nam has been represented in the APQN since its founding in 2005. Currently the APQN has six member organizations from Việt Nam; one full member, one intermediate member, and four institutional members. Table 8.3 lists the members and the year when each joined the APQN. Việt Nam has more higher education institutions
member organizations than other countries in Southeast Asia.\textsuperscript{30} The other Southeast Asian countries also have only one QA agency as a member organization\textsuperscript{31}.

\textit{Table 8.3 APQN Member Organizations from Việt Nam}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Member Status</th>
<th>Year Joined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Center for Education Quality Assurance and Research Development, VNU-Hanoi</td>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Educational Testing and Quality Assessment, VNU-Ho Chi Minh City</td>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Higher Education Research, Institute for Educational Research, University of Pedagogy, Ho Chi Minh City</td>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Department of Education Testing and Accreditation, MOET</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directorate of Vocational Training</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanoi National University of Education</td>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Except for the Directorate of Vocational Training, I interviewed at least one key informant from each member organization as part of my key informant interviews. The interviews also highlight a neo-liberal approach to higher education, especially those interviews with the MOET officials. The World Bank’s higher education agenda can clearly be seen in many of the approaches the MOET key informants share.

\textbf{Key Informant Interviews: Implementing QA in Việt Nam}

As mentioned in Chapter Four, nine key informant interviews were conducted in Việt Nam in 2009 and 2010. Four key informants were from universities, four from MOET, and one from an international NGO. The main criteria for selecting informants were that they had knowledge and expertise in QA policies and practices in Việt Nam and had an understanding of the APQN capacity building activities. Requests for interviews were sent to 25 people via email who worked in MOET, in APQN member

\textsuperscript{30} Cambodia and Malaysia have one institutional member each.

\textsuperscript{31} The Philippines has three full member organizations because of its long history of using accreditation practices.
organizations, NGOs, and in universities. One interview used a translator; the rest were conducted in English. All but one key informant had a PhD degree.

Interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded for themes related to the key informant’s perceptions of national, regional, and international QA capacity building in Việt Nam. I used open-coding to allow the priorities and perspectives of the key informants to emerge. To identify these themes, transcripts of the interviews were read several times to compare and contrast the information shared by all key informants. After the first round of interviews in 2009, the transcripts were read and coded. After a second round of interviews in 2010, all transcripts were read and re-coded. After the themes were identified, I compared the information shared within the themes, particularly noting the differences between key informants from MOET and universities. In my analysis, I noted areas of saturation and common phrases used; and paid particular attention to ideas about norm-setting, underlying values, and any mention of national identity and reasons for participating in regional initiatives. An audit was done of 20% of the interviews to determine the validity of the themes.

The six themes found in the interviews are: 1) understanding of QA, 2) challenges to developing QA in Việt Nam, 3) the role of MOET in establishing QA, 4) other countries participating in Việt Nam’s QA capacity building, 5) QA activities sponsored by regional and international organizations, and 6) APQN as a bridge. The Vietnamese key informants offer the perspective of a developing country that has strong ties to the World Bank. The perspectives of higher education regionalization shared by these national actors show that the regional dimension of QA is strongly tied to economic development and strengthening Việt Nam’s comparative advantage.

“Learning the theory of quality assurance from the West”.

QA is mainly understood in the language of donors, primarily the World Bank, NUFFIC, and smaller regional bodies like the APQN. One key informant from a research university confirmed, “Many people are learning the theory of quality assurance from the West (Vietnam.03.24.10.Univ1).” As the Renovation Agenda outlined, a fitness for purpose definition of quality has been adopted by many of the key informants I
interviewed, but also a definition of quality as excellence can be found in comments about the lack of quality in Việt Nam.

The practice of QA, as already identified, is in the accreditation model of self-evaluation based on the institution’s mission, with external evaluation by an “independent” body that confirms that the institutions QA practices are demonstrating the institution’s purpose. The accreditation model and the fitness for purpose definition of quality are compatible with one another; however, as Chapter Three suggests accreditation is best suited for a differentiated system, towards which Việt Nam is still working. One key informant explains:

So accreditation is meaningful when the MOET cannot control the universities, and they allow the universities to have their own missions and to meet the needs of society. Accreditation is meaningless when they treat every university in the same way. If you want to do it this way, then you have quality control, or inspection, not accreditation and quality assurance (Vietnam.03.24.10.Univ1).

When MOET demands standardized uniformity for all higher education institutions, a differentiated system is difficult to come by.

An audit model, as recommended by a Vietnamese speaker at the 2010 APQN conference, may be more suitable to Việt Nam’s situation because the audit model is not assessing the actual program or institutional quality, but rather an audit evaluates the procedures of those who are responsible for quality to determine if their internal system is adequate and appropriate (Skolnik, 2010; Woodhouse, 2003). The distinction between accreditation and audit models may not be very clear in Việt Nam, as indicated by another key informant from a research university:

For me I think the process of audit and accreditation is not much different. So, it just is a term. Say for example, the Americans call it accreditation, the Australians and British call it audit. But for me it’s the same process. That’s why I say audit or accreditation is the same, but we use the word accreditation here in Việt Nam (Vietnam.03.29.10.Univ4).

Because the World Bank recommended accreditation as the model, which is also the QA practice in the highly differentiated system of the US, Việt Nam has adopted a QA practice that does not match its state-centric, weakly differentiated system. Accreditation, therefore, is the term used.
This notion of policy borrowing based on foreign funding was suggested by a comment of a key informant from MOET when discussing foreign investment in the higher education system. The official recognized international funding opportunities for QA development:

Translator:
He has not much experience with international organizations, but now as he sees these organizations who are paying a lot of attention to the accreditation and quality management program these projects in this area may be very (much) easier for projects to be approved by these organizations.

MM:
I want to follow up with that. What do you mean by being approved by these organizations? Can you clarify that?

Translator:
It’s kind of sponsor.

MM:
OK. So because quality assurance and accreditation is receiving attention from these international organizations, then perhaps there may be funding for these types of projects within Vietnam?

Translator:
Yes.

(Vietnam.03.18.09.MOET3)

These two quotes show the decontextualizing and importing aspects of policy transfer (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). First, the roles of accreditation vs. audit have been decontextualized, and the meaning of the practices has become blurry. Second, the importing aspect of accreditation uses a certifying mechanism, which validates certain actors and their claims (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). The use of accreditation as the chosen QA practice, most likely was influenced by the World Bank, and perhaps other donors.

The World Bank’s neo-liberal agenda, as Chapter Five describes emphasizes institutional autonomy, decentralization, and accountability. Institutional autonomy and decentralization are not practices that are currently compatible with the central-planning
traditions of the SRV. The de-contextualization of these QA practices in the policy borrowing process, and the emphasis on accountability, which certainly resonates with the SRV policies, makes accreditation seem like a viable approach.

Accreditation at the moment may be an empty promise of quality. One key informant who had participated in the APQN Annual Conference in 2009 mentioned a presentation given by a QA professional in Indonesia who reported that quality was a challenge in the system, yet later stated that 97% of the universities were accredited\(^{32}\). During the question and answer session, the question was asked what the 97% statistic represented: easy accreditation standards or high quality institutions. The key informant remembered this APQN presentation and reflected on that question:

> I suspect Việt Nam is going to be in the same situation. But for me it’s very clear that the government, or MOET, doesn’t seem to hear that message. It is a waste if you make everyone do external assessment and all of them, 100% and 99% is accredited and the quality is not improved, why are you doing it? Because if you know it that you get more funding, then why assess? If you can live with it, why do you need to assess (Vietnam.03.25.10.Univ2)?

To work on improvement rather than compliance to state regulations is part of the institutional culture change identified earlier in this chapter. The incentives for such a shift are necessary at all levels of the QA process, from the individual to the system. This comment also brings up an important point about “organizational hypocrisy.”

Organizational hypocrisy, a term popularized by Stephen Krasner’s (1999) analysis of national sovereignty and how often national sovereignty is violated for the purpose of signing onto international and regional agreements. Lipson (2007) argues that organizational hypocrisy can be a functional necessity for managing conflicts between normative and operational demands. In this case, MOET is managing the conflict between international QA norms and central planning of QA. It is stuck between implementing international norms of QA, in particular those that support the World Bank’s neo-liberal initiatives, while at the same time negotiating operational pressures related to its centrally-planned system.

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\(^{32}\) My field notes from this particular session reported that many of the Vietnamese participants seemed to be agitated during this presentation. There was an excessive amount of talking in it compared to the other presentations, which could be due to the translation or the similarities with the Indonesian system and the Vietnamese system.
Regardless of how quality is defined or the terms used to describe its practice, to most university representatives involved in QA activities, QA is about filling out forms. A key informant from a university explained,

For many people, quality assurance means writing up a report. And the ministry will come check. It’s more another piece of administrative work to do. But this time you have to have all the documents to show them. So, it’s a lot of paperwork without improvement. Because I think there are no consequences, accreditation until now has no consequences…Nobody has been punished or rewarded, for doing badly or doing really well (Vietnam.03.25.10.Univ2).

The introduction of the Statute on Public Transparency may change the lack of consequences mentioned in this quote, but this comment offers insight into the challenges that universities face. This same key informant continued,

…you can only have money if you have more students, collecting fees, because the government does not do anything for you to improve, so one indicator of quality is the percentage of students and teachers: the student-teacher ratio. That is a very bad indicator. We are not happy with that indicator…. no university wants to admit that, because they are afraid the government will say you should not have more students. So they try to fake documents so that on paper it shows that you have 1:20 students, and they hope the government will not discover that. So that is not self-assessment. And it’s the reality….but the way things are being done, I’m sick of it sometimes. More paper work, and its fake statistics (Vietnam.03.25.10.Univ2).

Corruption is already a challenge in the higher education system, and the introduction of QA doesn’t seem to have mitigated this problem. The existence of corruption, cheating, bribes, and plagiarism lacks enforceable solutions (McCornac, 2007). Although the 2005 Education Law is clear that corruption is unacceptable, unless it is enforced, problems will remain.

“It takes effort for us to change”.

The main challenge to implementing QA is changing the institutional culture, both in higher education institutions and in MOET. As in other countries/territories, the

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33 Articles 75 and 88 of the Education Law prohibit students and teachers from behaving fraudulently to obtain or offer admissions, or while taking or grading examinations. It is illegal for teachers to “force learners to take extra classes for money,” or to intentionally misevaluate learners’ examinations (2005 Education Law, 2005, p. 32).
tension between the state and academe is apparent in Việt Nam with higher education institutions. Both sides are pointing to each other as the reason for why advancement in QA is not happening as quickly as expected.

Similar to academics in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, underpaid Vietnamese academics often have additional teaching positions in private institutions. Continued underfunding of professors, combined with the expansion of private higher education, offers no incentive for academics to carry only one position. Being able to live on one salary would allow academics the necessary time to develop QA practices in the classroom, department, and institution.

QA practices are aimed to create a “quality culture” within institutions (MOET, 2006a). The main concern is that universities are not teaching relevant subjects applicable to Việt Nam’s entry into the knowledge economy (IIE-Vietnam, 2004). The institutional culture has for many years been made up of an aging professoriate comfortable with the status quo, familiar with having little institutional autonomy and no accountability (Wasley, 2007). Another challenge with institutional culture is the traditional teaching and learning styles that emphasize rote learning and strict discipline, which may no longer be appropriate for cultivating creativity and innovation (M. Hayden & Thiep, 2007; IIE-Vietnam, 2004; World Bank, 1998).

The main rationale for changing the culture of the institutions is to participate in the global knowledge economy (IIE-Vietnam, 2004; World Bank, 1998). The key informant from an NGO offered insight into the change process:

I just like to share that it’s important for us to look at quality and to improve our quality because other people are trying to move forward, and if we don’t because in the long run we will be left out. And in order to do that we need to help people to be aware of the importance of this, and you know change. And from the zero to do something, I think that it takes effort for us to change. Um, so building the culture is also a kind of, I think, a time taking task (Vietnam.03.18.09.NGO).

Being left behind in the global knowledge economy because of a resistance to change is a growing concern. World Bank reports (World Bank, 2008a, 2008b) and other studies (Duggan, 2001; Salomon & Ket, 2007; Tuy, 2007) suggest that changing the culture of the institutions is not the only challenge; change is slow both at institutional and ministry levels due to the central-planning ethos of MOET.
Most of the key informants from MOET and universities recognized that part of the resistance to change is rooted in the need for capacity building: for training on how to conduct quality assessment, specifically self-evaluation and accreditation reports. There is also a challenge with convincing universities to initiate QA policies, especially when enrollment is not a problem and the workload for faculty and administration is already heavy. One key informant from MOET explained:

…it costs you when you want to develop a quality culture. To make people understand, to pay more attention….So even when you offer training, they learn, but they are new, so it’s very difficult. So they should send some consultants to check, to check, to ask universities to work according to plan, but also to explain, to tell them how to do, to explain. Otherwise they cannot do it. And also to have some small money, because they also want to have some quality learning, some activities, meetings, or also they want to have some conference with workshop, inside university, to help people understand. So I think it’s not much, for us to give universities to have money (Vietnam.03.12.09.MOET1).

The bottom line is that universities need incentives. The combination of increased accountability mechanisms, limited funding, a small percentage of PhD holders (and qualified peer reviewers for the accreditation process), and staff who are working two to three side jobs to keep up with increasing inflation\textsuperscript{34}, makes it very difficult for universities to find the time to work on mandated QA mechanisms.

Since students are flocking to enroll in higher education, there is no incentive to improve quality because the market is not demanding it. Regardless of the quality, families will send their children to university, private or public, if they are accepted. With the efforts to move towards mass higher education, the government is in a difficult position of using the market to push for shifts in institutional culture, when the market (the students and parents\textsuperscript{35}) is not providing the necessary pull to make these changes.

Offering financial incentives, particularly in the current economic climate, is seen to be one solution to motivate universities and their staff to engage in the QA process.

\textsuperscript{34} As anecdotal evidence, one key informant met me on a Saturday afternoon at another job site, working as a consultant for a private school. This key informant shared they had three other jobs besides their university position.

\textsuperscript{35} The 1998 Education Law assigns families the responsibility of “together with the school to raise the quality and efficiency of Education. (Art. 82).”
The same key informant from MOET shares his ideas about attaching financial incentives to QA initiatives:

Vietnam.03.12.09.MOET1

…I also suggest to HEP two, HEP one, higher education project to give $30,000 to ten universities. So you see it…Regulation is governments stick….This workshop and consultancy to teach them how to do.

MM:
Yes

Vietnam.03.12.09.MOET1

And this money, give each university $30,000, it’s the carrot….For the university regulation is not enough. Stick and carrot. They should know how to do; we should teach them how to do. So I use this policy. It’s not very much [he’s point the paper and the amount of money to the universities]. And it is also because we lack expertise.

MM:
You lack expertise in quality assurance?

Vietnam.03.12.09.MOET1

That’s right.

Regulations and standards are the stick, but because there are not many incentives for universities to change, financial incentives are suggested as the necessary carrot. Conrad and Wilson’s (1985) decision-making model of quality measurement, as discussed in Chapter Three, could potentially be the most common in Việt Nam if the “stick and carrot” motivations for QA capacity building are implemented. The decision-making model aligns academic decisions to evaluation mechanisms. This model perpetuates MOET’s control over higher education institutions, leaving little institutional autonomy and academic freedom, which keeps authority out of the hands of academics and in the hands of policy makers (Polster & Newson, 1998). The carrot and stick perspective of quality management may offer temporary solutions, but it ultimately undermines institutional autonomy and academic freedom if programs and departments make decisions based on how to look best on assessment exercises.
This “stick and carrot” approach is closely compatible with the World Bank’
incentive grant structure of many of its higher education projects, as Chapter Five
illustrated (World Bank, 2003, 2007c, 2010a, 2010c, 2011c). In fact, it is almost identical
to the strategy proposed in the Second Higher Education Project for Nepal (World Bank,
2007c). It is not clear to me if this key informant knew about Nepal’s project when we
spoke. Fostering competition between higher education institutions is the goal of these
incentives, which compliment the World Bank’s neo-liberal strategies. In policy transfer,
policies that gain traction are those that resonate with certain structures of the
policymaking process (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004). For Việt Nam, the central-planning
structures of MOET would resonate with the World Bank’s incentive grants that
ultimately keep the QA process in the control of MOET.

“All things wait for MOET”.

As the previous themes have demonstrated, MOET is the central player in
motivating public universities to comply with the new QA regulations. “All things wait
for MOET (Vietnam.03.27.10.Univ3)” asserts one key informant from a public
university. As was to be expected, all the key informants from universities mentioned the
intense control by MOET over universities. On the other hand, most of the Ministry key
informants acknowledged the poor quality of higher education, the need for QA, and
emphasized a future intention to create more flexibility in the QA structures managing
universities (without identifying the challenges universities face with MOET’s control in
the current system). It is important to note that of the 376 universities and colleges in the
country, MOET only directly controls 54 public universities, which is 14.4% of the
system, nonetheless, MOET has greater influence on the system than the percentage of
universities and colleges directly under its control (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2009;
World Bank, 2008b).

One of the challenges for MOET is the how to handle transparency in the funding
mechanisms for universities. One key informant explained the initial discussions of how
to implement QA in the early stages of its development:

[A]bout 10 years ago when the Vietnamese government started with the
Higher Education Project 1, with the loan from the World Bank, part of
the team that led the survey of the higher education institutions
…proposed to produce…. performance indicators and put them in ranking tables, or something like that, and let the people make a choice. But at the time it was sensitive, because the MOET was saying it is not good for institutions to compare different aspects of their finance or academic figures. I don’t know why, but I think the most likely reason was the funding mechanism has some flaws in it. Some institutions get more money than other ones. And they don’t want to show that. Money is talking (Vietnam.03.15.09.MOET4).

The lack of transparency is not just a QA challenge for how universities account for their activities to MOET, but also for MOET in how universities are funded. Given the strong tradition of state universities under a high level of control by MOET, current QA practices leave little room for institutional autonomy. The only portion of the higher education sector that does not have challenges with institutional autonomy is the foreign providers.

“Foreign made seems to be better than domestic”.

Involving foreign experts, as international consultants or in-country foreign providers, in the QA process increases the level of respect and interest in QA practice, as several key informants indicated. The key informants also realized that international experts can’t single-handedly change institutional culture; it must happen organically, through institutional activities and collaboration.

Foreign partners can also help higher education reform efforts through the expected “quality culture” that international QA experts or foreign universities may demonstrate. One key informant at MOET described his aim for connecting with international QA experts:

Vietnam.03.12.09.MOET1

We need a quality culture here.

MM:

Yeah.

Vietnam.03.12.09.MOET1

What’s it for? For nothing. But if I do here [points to the Self-Evaluation Report and improvement drawing] I have quality culture here.

Improvement activities form a culture. Make people understand, make
more interested, make people want to improve. This is culture. Is it the same? Or should we develop culture here. Doing. Learning by doing.

MM:
Yes.

Vietnam.03.12.09.MOET1
So I think it’s a lesson that is really important for Việt Nam and for other countries. But according to me it is very difficult to have this.

Both foreign experts and foreign providers have an outsider’s perspective to the higher education system in Việt Nam. The notion of importing certifications (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004), as mentioned earlier, is salient here. International experts provide a sense of legitimacy to the new QA policies, adapted by MOET and can help persuade higher education institutions to follow them. If an international expert can “certify” that the QA policies MOET is advancing are those that are compatible with reputable higher education systems, like those of the US, or if these foreign experts can show how other developing countries have advanced economically since adopting similar QA practices, higher education institutions may be persuaded to adopt QA more quickly.

One key informant admitted, “Foreign made seems to be better than domestic one Vietnam.03.15.09.MOET2).” Opening up the higher education system to foreign providers also is expected to demonstrate to Vietnamese university administrators how high quality teaching, learning, and research are done. Some of the rationales for the World Bank New Models University Project and the IFC and Asia Development Bank RMIT projects are evidence of this expectation. The New Models project by the World Bank is intended to model “best practices” in higher education provision including governance and accountability for performance. Although foreign provision has a lot to offer Việt Nam, it is focused in the urban areas, serving mainly the elite, which not only reinforces and deepens socio-economic status gaps, but provides learning opportunities only for universities in urban areas. The key informants all expressed an uncritical perspective of foreign partnerships, only seeing the benefits of these strategies. The challenge to opening up the system to foreign universities is the 2003 Guideline’s assumption that foreign providers have a QA system compatible with the purposes of higher education in Việt Nam.
Private foreign partnerships and universities are given the most flexibility and autonomy because they are not required to participate in Việt Nam’s QA practices. Foreign universities are required to undergo QA within their “home” country. One key informant describes the motivation behind establishing foreign partnerships:

There are two big motivations. First one is the demands for high quality higher education service. You can see that many Vietnamese families send their children abroad for higher education studies. It costs a lot, so if they can study in Việt Nam, and with the high quality higher education service, it will be much cheaper. The other aspect it is from the perspective of management, the government officials, accreditation officials, want to encourage this trend because they see it as a driving force for their own reform efforts in Việt Nam, because they can learn from the foreign providers in three terms. The first one is the program curriculum, the second one is the method of teaching, and the third one is the infrastructure and facilities of high quality higher education providers; they want to learn from the foreign providers in these terms (Vietnam.03.18.09.MOET2).

This expectation of foreign institutions shows three assumptions: 1) Việt Nam can rely on other countries with the resources to fund foreign branch campuses to adequately conduct QA, 2) foreign institutions offer a higher quality of teaching and research than domestic Vietnamese institutions, and 3) once a model is presented, Vietnamese universities will adapt their practices and procedures to match those of their foreign partners and foreign institutions. These assumptions implicitly suggest that foreign institutions can participate outside of the established Vietnamese higher education traditions, can have an impact on changing these traditions.

Competition also plays a role in the promotion of foreign “model” universities, which was not discussed by the key informants. If these foreign universities are able to collect higher fees and out-compete the national institutions, as they are expected to do, Vietnamese state universities may begin to model the foreign universities. The challenge with this logic is that the premise is that Vietnamese state universities do not have the capacity to charge higher fees because tuition is controlled by the SRV. State universities will never be able to compete with private foreign high-quality universities; however, they may learn how to navigate the competitive higher education market through observing how the foreign model universities succeed in this market.
MOET plays an important, and perhaps overlooked, function as a node for universities to connect with other foreign universities, or to connect Vietnamese QA professionals with regional or international QA professionals. MOET also secures international and/or regional financial support for QA capacity building for the entire system, whereas higher education institutions can secure funding and resources based on small projects, individual research interests, and in some cases regional initiatives.

MOET is the only organization that can engage in system-wide higher education projects with bi-lateral, regional, and/or international partners/donors. Besides the World Bank funding, MOET staff actively look for funding QA capacity building through extensive networking. One key informant describes the networking he did to initially understand QA practices:

So, I start to think about quality assurance and accreditation. So, I exchange emails to many people. I do in this way [he is drawing a picture]. If I know you, I don’t know about you, but I know you, so I will send you a question about quality assurance and accreditation, and I also ask you if you know somebody can you introduce somebody to me so I can ask him. So during a few months I receive a lot of information and from different countries…..So I had all this information from different countries for how to arrange, um, to develop quality assurance and accreditation. I was lucky when I see SEAMEO, Southeast Asian Ministry of Education, set up one task group called SEAMEO Accreditation and Quality Assurance Group. So I go in this group (Vietnam.03.12.09.MOET1).

Collecting QA practices and policies of international and regional countries can substantiate the rationales for implementing QA in Việt Nam. By citing the QA practices of other countries that are similar to the proposed QA policies in Việt Nam, MOET can maintain its central planning role.

“Step by step”.

Several regional and international organizations have sponsored QA activities in Việt Nam through capacity building activities such as workshops, online courses, and internships mostly for MOET staff and some for university staff. Most of the key informants had participated in at least two capacity building activities sponsored by international and/or regional donors. The objective for QA training is to understand how
other countries are developing and implementing guidelines and standards. One key informant acknowledged:

Of course we are still in the pilot, I think, in the beginning phase... [There is] a big effort by the Vietnamese government to learn... from other countries and try to do the right thing for our country... we need to have more specific guidelines and standards, so we make sure we are abreast with other countries in the region first, and then be able to be recognized (Vietnam.03.15.09.NGO).

This comment acknowledges a step-by-step process of first aligning QA policies and practices with other countries in the region, and then being recognized on the international stage. Four of the nine key informants described QA capacity building as a “step-by-step” process. The idea of moving step by step, not only suggests focusing on the country, and then the region, and then the international higher education arena, but also represents the idea of the change process requiring patience, time, and small, “incremental” steps.

The ties that Việt Nam has within the sub-region are not that strong. It entered ASEAN and SEAMEO later than other countries. One key informant recognized that greater integration is needed and the APQN can assist with that process.

Vietnam.03.24.10.Univ.1

[D]irectly there is not a very close relationship between Việt Nam and other countries..... We do not have the exchange of staff, or you invite the external reviewers to come from other countries... Yeah, such activities I think it’s very necessary for us. But I know it’s hard because of the language and funding and a lot of difficulties. But we get something. For example when we organize workshops, we invite others from other countries and they came here and we tried to exchange ideas and that.

MM:

And some of those people you invited from outside the country were people you knew from APQN?

Vietnam.03.24.10.Univ.1

Yes. So we think that for the first stages it’s OK, but we want more.
There is an expectation with this comment that QA capacity building is in the first stage, with several possible stages in the future. As Việt Nam advances in its QA capacity the opportunities for collaboration with other countries/territories will increase.

One key informant who has represented Việt Nam in several QA capacity building activities in the region describes the networking and mutual learning opportunities between Việt Nam and Laos:

Yes, and I gave my presentation about Việt Nam. And because Laos is our good neighbor; it’s very near Việt Nam. The way they established their accreditation is the same as Việt Nam. We told them about how Việt Nam do… Việt Nam and Laos political issues, it’s a bit similar, so the first time the national accrediting agency should belong to MOET, and now we are coordinating mutual accreditation (Vietnam.03.15.09.MOET2).

MOET officials participate in regional and international organizations in order to learn from others and to share what Việt Nam is doing. Setting the objectives of moving the higher education system to be recognized on the international level can also be seen in the English-speaking and academic backgrounds of the senior officials involved in QA capacity building.

Like the survey participants, all the key informants had post-graduate education, more than half of whom had specific post-graduate training in quality assurance and/or evaluation methods. Three key informants had studied in universities in Australia, one had studied in the United States, and one had studied in Japan. Two of the key informants were hired into QA positions because of their English-speaking abilities. The key informants, who I contacted because of their involvement in the APQN and other regional initiatives, had also participated in workshops in Việt Nam, in the sub-region (Thailand, Cambodia, and the Philippines), in the region (Australia and Japan), and in Europe (the UK and Netherlands). Some had participated in extended research visits to Australia and the United States through bi-lateral and multi-lateral aid projects.

Two of the participants mentioned the importance of ASEAN activities because as the ASEAN countries further integrate their economies, further educational integration will happen. One of the motivations for building QA within the region was to reduce the quality gap in higher education provision in order to begin to harmonize the regional higher education system, creating something like a Bologna Process. One MOET official shared:
First we have to improve or enhance the level of education so that it will be more or less the same with each other. Not so different with each other (Vietnam.03.18.09.MOET3)

Mutual recognition and increased mobility of students and scholars were mentioned by key informants as rationales for participating in regional organizations like SEAMEO-RIHED and AQAN.

Regional organizations are used for political reasons, as well. Another key informant mentioned his use of SEAMEO-RIHED in persuading the head of the Ministry to use certain QA policies in Việt Nam’s reform efforts. He described how he used a SEAMEO-RIHED document:

…It's called Policy Framework for…um….Quality Assurance Policy Framework for Higher Education for Southeast Asian Countries. We submitted it to SEAMEO in 2002. I write a letter to…the director of SEAMEO RIHED…..I suggested to him that he should write a letter to each country, to the minister of each country, and ask the minister to, to ask people in local country, to study, recommend, and implement this paper. So, you see….I go through SEAMEO to get to my minister to implement….So, what we have at the first, what I mean is, even until now, what we mention is also strongly influenced by this paper (Vietnam.03.12.09.MOET1).

Regional QA initiatives, developed among a small group of national actors, validate the positions of those actors within their own country/territory. The attraction to regional organizations is that they are useful tools for political, as well as economic, gains.

**APQN: “It is a kind of a bridge”**.

For Việt Nam, the APQN has served as a bridge between developing countries, between countries within the sub-region, between developing and industrialized countries in the Asia Pacific region, and between international and regional QA actors. This bridging is seen through the APQN’s role as funder and capacity builder. In Việt Nam, the APQN has sponsored two workshops, a pre-conference workshop solely for Vietnamese QA professionals, at least one internship, and Vietnamese professionals participated in the jointly sponsored UNESCO-IIEP online course. During the first three years of the DGF, the APQN funded travel costs for Vietnamese to participate in its
Annual Conferences, as well as in other nearby QA workshops in Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia and Hong Kong.

The networking capacity of the APQN has given Vietnamese QA professionals opportunities to participate in discussions beyond their national borders. One key informant states

I think that APQN is very good, very useful network for us, to enhance our work in the area of quality assurance. And also it is a kind of a bridge to connect us to different people, different organizations working in the field of quality assurance within Asia Pacific (Vietnam.03.29.10.Univ4).

The key informants have not only learned further about QA practices and policies, but have also been given the opportunity to share their experiences and to report on how well or how challenged the process of developing QA is for Việt Nam.

On the whole, most of the key informants believed that the APQN was a valuable resource, and even though its funding is now limited, it provides useful resources for capacity building efforts in the country. Another key informant from a university explained:

And from 2008, until now, we have attended every conference. We tried to translate some criteria and some documents, APQN documents. And after that we have tried to have a briefing of the documents, we write and we present for training to my college (Vietnam.03.27.10.Univ3).

The APQN’s resources provide busy university and MOET officials with tools for training others within the country that they don’t have to develop themselves.

The APQN activities also give individual participants a platform for sharing the Vietnamese experience, which also provides individual benefits. Several key informants explained individual and organizational gains for participating in APQN activities, specifically skill development, information sharing, and keeping abreast of new debates in the field. The networking nature of the conferences helped key informants stay up to date on the debates in the field. One key informant describes:

[F]irst of all as an expert looking into this field, it helps to get in touch with people and listen to their debate about things that are going on all over the world and in this region. I think that, of course, it positively contributes to my development, professional development (Vietnam.03.25.10.Univ2).
The professional development of QA actors has individual and collective gains for developing countries. For working on large international development projects, such as those of the World Bank, capacity building activities reinforce recommended policy strategies within the country. The networking of QA professionals from developing countries at APQN events, especially with others who are working on World Bank projects, also supports the individual currency of QA professionals.

Using regional networks, like the APQN, as stepping stones to reach the international level of higher education policymaking and practice is another rationale for participating in the APQN. One MOET official hoped that the APQN could serve as a catalyst for future sub-regional collaboration.

Translator:

Việt Nam has been a member of this network since 2008. And the biggest expectation in Việt Nam, there are two: The first one is to exchange experience regarding quality assurance and quality management and the second one is in the future maybe Việt Nam and other countries in the region will work towards mutual recognition of degrees. Việt Nam also wants to increase the mobility of students and teachers.

MM:
Within the region or internationally?

Translator:
Within the region.

Vietnam.03.18.09.MOET3

First region then….

Translator:
First in the region and then internationally.

The other key informants from MOET also mentioned that participating in APQN activities supported further collaboration among Ministries of Education, QA Agencies, and universities.

Although most of the key informants felt their membership in the APQN was important, however, a few from universities felt skeptical about the APQN’s value to
universities. One key informant from a university felt the APQN’s funding processes were too cumbersome.

Yeah, we feel we belong to APQN, but if I evaluate the relationship, I would just give it just above average. For example, if we want to get support from APQN, there are a lot of processes to follow. If you want to organize activities, if you want other people to come to your country, or if you want to go there, OK, there is a lot of paperwork (Vietnam.03.24.10.Univ1).

Even with this complaint about its processes, this key informant was eager to become more active in APQN activities. The APQN is not just about QA capacity building, but also about building capacity for engaging with international organizations, like the World Bank and UNESCO, who have highly bureaucratic processes. APQN member organizations, and the individuals representing these organizations, are offered an opportunity to understand how international funding mechanisms work through interaction with APQN projects funded by GIQAC.

The key informant interviews offer insights into the regional and international influences on national QA capacity building. The interviews highlight the tensions with neo-liberal practices that foster institutional competition, transparency, accountability, and institutional autonomy and with the state-controlled policies related to tuition, enrollment, and funding, that limit the role of the market in institutional competition. The tensions exist because there is a lack of incentives for universities to participate in QA activities based on the market not pushing for quality.

The values shared by the key informants reaffirms the textual analysis that the Vietnamese experiences of globalization sit between neo-liberal and state/protectionist ideal-types. The neo-liberal values such as cultivating creativity and innovation through improved pedagogical practices, creating flexibility in the system, and regional integration are at tension with the state/protectionist values such as MOET’s policy to treat all higher education institutions equally, and the tradition of higher education institutions in Việt Nam having little institutional autonomy in a centrally-planned higher education system. Because of the conflicting values experienced in Vietnamese QA policymaking, the notions of higher education regionalization may take an interesting turn. So far, it appears that the alignment with the World Bank’s neo-liberal practices and
the interest in regional integration, and the use of the APQN to network with international
and regional actors is an example of higher education regionalization as a sub-set of
globalization. The strong traditional role of the state may be culturally rooted, which will
inhibit the full adoption of neo-liberal practices in the higher education system. As policy
transfer is “contextualized,” Việt Nam may be a voice for alternatives to globalization
within the sub-region of Southeast Asia. It is too early to tell how Việt Nam will engage
with the global market economy, and how strongly its state/protectionist higher education
traditions will dominate QA practice.

Comparison of GIQAC, APQN and Vietnamese Key Informants

The Vietnamese key informants provide a good example of the challenges a
developing country faces in implementing QA while balancing the needs of the state,
market, and the academy. When comparing the key informant themes of 1) QA
understanding, 2) challenges for QA, 3) regional identity/cooperation, and 4) QA
capacity building between the national, regional, and international key informants, the
Vietnamese key informants bring out the national perspective of QA and higher
education regionalization.

In understanding QA, the Vietnamese key informants shared similar values to the
World Bank, and asserted that their knowledge of QA is from the West. Understanding
QA as a western concept, even though the other categories of the key informant did not
see it as a western concept, shows that the Vietnamese key informants have a different
perspective of QA norms than the other key informants. Changing institutional culture
was also an important part of understanding QA, which is emphasized in the textual
analysis of the international organizations and the APQN’s publications and online
course materials, but not in the key informant interviews.

Challenges for QA align with the notion of changing institutional culture in the
Vietnamese key informant interviews. Transparency of funding, lack of incentives for
institutions to develop QA practices, as well as shifting from neo-liberal practices while
the market is not demanding quality within the higher education system is a challenge
that may be specific to Việt Nam.
Concepts of the region are in terms of how the regional level can help Việt Nam participate in the global knowledge economy through benchmarking its system against others in the region, which was a similar sentiment, shared in the APQN key informant interviews. The Vietnamese key informants identified that there were weak ties to the region, which were important to strengthen if they were to engage in greater economic integration.

QA capacity building for the Vietnamese key informants included incentives for higher education institutions to accept and adopt QA policies and practices. Networking with other QA professionals in the region is helpful to building capacity for the individual key informants, as well as to share ideas with other countries in how they are building QA capacity. This focus on networking speaks to some of the expectations that the GIQAC key informants had about fostering the development of networked societies through the APQN.

**Vietnamese Survey of the APQN Activities**

In order to understand the Vietnamese experience of QA capacity building and the ways in which the APQN supports these experiences, the survey of the APQN mailing list was also translated into Vietnamese. Thirty-seven QA professionals were contacted, 19 women, and 18 men. Twelve QA professionals responded; nine women, three men, yielding a 33% response rate. When the response rate is disaggregated by sex, 50% of the female QA professionals responded and 15% of the male QA professionals responded. Of the thirty-seven QA professionals contacted, 15 were from member organizations, 22 were from non-member organizations. Five of the survey respondents self-identified as being from APQN member organizations, six were not, and one wasn’t sure. Six respondents identified as being from a higher education institution, five from a governmental department, and one from an international organization. All of the participants have post-secondary degrees and have completed some graduate study; eight have graduate degrees, three of which are PhDs. Although I sent the survey request to all the key informants, based on the number of self-identified PhD holders who completed the survey, it is safe to assume that no more than four survey participants (33%) were key informants.
Number of years interested in QA.

Most of the survey participants have been involved in quality assurance for three to five years. The newness of QA with its introduction in the 2005 Education Law would correspond with these responses. Figure 8.1 describes the number of years the 12 Vietnamese survey participants have been interested in QA.

![Figure 8.1. Years of QA interest of Vietnamese version respondents](chart)

When compared to the survey participants of the English version (discussed in the previous chapter), the participants of the Vietnamese version have the same average of years of interest in QA—three to five years—as the survey participants in the English version; however, more of the English version participants had over five years of QA interest than the Vietnamese survey participants.

Experience with APQN activities and events.

The Vietnamese QA professionals had more experience with APQN activities and/or events than those who completed the English version of the survey. Figure 8.2 shows that ten survey participants have participated in an APQN event or activity; one of which has been involved in over seven APQN activities or events. Part of why this might be the case is that DGF funding was specifically targeted towards funding QA capacity.
building activities for developing countries, and since Việt Nam has been represented in the APQN since its beginning, its QA professionals were able to use DGF funds to participate in APQN activities and events.

![Figure 8.2. Number of times Vietnamese version respondents attended APQN events](image)

This level of awareness of APQN activities and events, can highlight the role that the APQN has played in Vietnamese QA policymaking and practice.

**Sponsors of APQN activities and events.**

When asked to identify the types of sponsors who funded participation in APQN events/activities, three of the participants who were sponsored by the APQN did not identify it as a regional body. Figure 8.3 shows the types of sponsor organizations for APQN activities. Instead of categorizing the APQN as a regional body, three of the four responses for the “other” category listed it as “other”. In addition, six of the survey respondents had at least some of their participation costs sponsored by an international organization. In total, ten of the twelve respondents had some or all of their APQN activities/events sponsored by an international or regional body, which suggests that transnational actors play a role in funding QA initiatives in Việt Nam.
Figure 8.3. Sponsors of APQN events for Vietnamese version respondents

Perceived benefits of APQN activities and events.

Being able to use resources from outside the country for assistance with QA capacity building is seen in the benefits gained from participation in APQN events and activities. The main benefit to the survey participants in attending APQN activities is the opportunity to learn what is happening outside Việt Nam. Survey participants ranked seven possible benefits to participating in the APQN’s events and activities; the most beneficial were a) learning about other training activities, b) networking with other countries in their geographical region, and c), and d) learning about international QA practices. Figure 8.4 shows all seven possible benefits of participation in APQN events and activities.

The aggregated response for learning about international QA practices had the highest positive ranking, although most of the respondents indicated a moderate gain. The possible benefit that was ranked the most negatively was “learning about techniques for overcoming challenges with QA in our national system,” which was ranked by seven respondents as “a little” or “not at all;” three ranked as “moderately.” This survey shows
that the respondents did not find the APQN helpful in overcoming QA challenges they face within the country, yet they use the APQN for information gathering and sharing.

This finding corroborates with the response from an open-ended question about why participants were interested in the APQN. Two kinds of answers were given: 1) for information sharing and 2) because it’s related to my job. One respondent’s comment aptly summarizes the overall responses: “Because there are many useful information with regards to quality assurance for my organization.”
Figure 8.4. Vietnamese version respondents’ ranking of possible benefits of APQN events and activities
Dissemination of knowledge gained from APQN within Việt Nam.

When asked whether the knowledge gained from APQN activities is being filtered down to higher education organizations in Việt Nam, the majority of the respondents agreed; two selected “strongly agree”, six selected “agree,” as Figure 8.5 illustrates. One respondent explained in the comment section “I'm very interested in APQN's operation. However, my superiors are not so I don't have the opportunity to delve further into APQN's operations.”

Figure 8.5. Level of agreement from Vietnamese version respondents about knowledge gained from APQN activities is being disseminated in Việt Nam

Degree of awareness of APQN activities and events within Việt Nam.

Although the survey participants had many experiences with APQN activities and events, they indicated that in Việt Nam, an overall awareness of APQN activities is not strong. A majority of the respondents believed that the awareness of APQN activities was “neither high, nor low”, as Figure 8.6 demonstrates. Three of the four who chose “very
high” or “high” were from governmental departments. In the open-ended comment section attached to this question one respondent commented,

I hope that over time, organizations in Việt Nam receive more professional knowledge from quality assurance organizations from more advanced/developed countries so that Việt Nam’s quality of education does not differ much compared to the rest of the world.

Both of the above comments suggest concern about the quality of Việt Nam’s current higher education system, similar to comments made by the key informants. The survey respondents believe that other, non-Vietnamese, quality assurance organizations may be able to help Việt Nam achieve greater quality on par with higher education in “the rest of the world”. These comments highlight a perception that Việt Nam’s higher education system will fall behind—or is behind—the “rest of the world,” and QA practices can bring it back inline. Although not explicit, globalization seems to be a driving rationale to develop QA practices in Việt Nam.

![Figure 8.6. Vietnamese version respondents opinions about level of awareness of APQN activities in Việt Nam](image)

**Figure 8.6. Vietnamese version respondents opinions about level of awareness of APQN activities in Việt Nam**

**Types of QA capacity building activities the APQN should consider.**

The survey asked participants to comment on the type of QA capacity building activities they would like the APQN to consider implementing in the future. Several
ambitious ideas were shared. The most common responses were to assist with personnel development, develop more opportunities for information sharing, and assist with building QA models, particularly regional QA. One survey participant offered:

Develop and train accreditors (1) to develop a system/network to guarantee both academic and operational quality of universities and (2) to set-up and manage organizations which oversee and review the quality of educational programs.

A wide range of ideas related to personnel development were shared, from training for QA at the programmatic level to funding regional staff exchanges. Regional staff exchanges could be either between countries with highly developed QA systems and lesser developed QA systems, or between countries that are at a similar stage of QA system development, to allow for sharing successes and challenges. In reference to information sharing activities, one participant recommended that the APQN:

Increase the number of events/functions to develop (or train), practice, and share experiences and models between member countries and non-member countries.

The overall comments link the purpose of information sharing and personnel training to developing an awareness of how other countries were conducting QA for the purpose of establishing regional agreements. Another respondent stated:

Quality assessment/audit is a type of operation which can be linked across different countries. So different countries should have the same standard and use the same quality assessments rather than each having their own.

Taken as a whole, the tone of the comments recognized that the APQN was a positive resource for QA professionals in Việt Nam, and wanted it to develop a wider outreach, or array of activities and events, than its current capacity.

**APQN website.**

Besides offering events and activities, the APQN has a website for QA professionals who speak English. When asked how often the APQN website is used, nine participants indicated some use of the website, three responded they do not use it. Figure 8.7 shows that the APQN website is reviewed less than once a month by most of the participants.
The APQN implemented a members-only section in 2009 to add value to the member organizations (and encourage non-member organizations to join). The members-only section provides access to APQN workshops and conferences. Non-members only have access to links for workshops and conferences not sponsored by the APQN. As Figure 8.8 describes, the workshop materials and the events calendar were the most used by the survey participants.
Figure 8.8. Information on the APQN website used by Vietnamese version respondents

Since only five of the participants are from member organizations, this finding suggests that the Vietnamese from non-members organizations are using the APQN website to connect to workshops and events sponsored by other organizations, confirming the idea that the APQN is used as a bridge. Two of the respondents indicated that they were unable to get to some of the content because of the restrictions based on membership status. One stated:

I’ve read quite a bit on the website but I’m limited to the amount of content I get access to because I’m not a full member.

Access to the website is not determined by the levels of membership, as this comment assumes. This comment suggests that the respondent believed that there are more materials on the website than may actually be the case.

Use of APQN documents developed for QA professionals.

As discussed in the previous chapter, there are three documents that the APQN has developed for QA professionals: 1) the Toolkit for Regulating Cross-Border Higher Education (with UNESCO-Bangkok), 2) the Brisbane Communiqué (with AUQA), and
3) the *Chiba Principles*. When asked if these documents have been used to guide QA policy and practices in Việt Nam, the most used document, as Figure 8.9 illustrates, was the *Toolkit for Regulating Cross-Border Higher Education*. The *Brisbane Communiqué*, a document developed by the Asia Pacific Education Ministers as a response to the Bologna Agreement (Asia-Pacific Education Ministers, 2006). The *Chiba Principles* were the APQN’s attempt to establish regional principles to guide QA policies and practices (APQN, 2008b). Both the *Brisbane Communiqué* and the *Chiba Principles* were less known and less used. The possible reason for why the *Toolkit for Regulating Cross-Border Higher Education* is used more than the other documents may be because of the national intent to use foreign provision to raise the level of quality in the country. Uses for the other documents would be for inter-regional or intra-regional initiatives, which may not currently be a high enough priority for QA professionals in Việt Nam. As one of the key informants noted, regional cooperation is the next stage, and not currently a priority for Vietnamese QA professionals, whereas understanding foreign partnerships as cross-border higher education is a priority.

### Table 8.4 Use of APQN Documents to Guide QA Policy and Practice in Việt Nam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
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<th>No</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Chiba Principles</em></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Brisbane Communiqué</em></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The survey of the Vietnamese QA professionals corroborates with the findings from the textual analysis and the key informant interviews. Specifically, regional and international organizations are sponsoring many of the QA capacity building activities, like those provided by the APQN. The APQN is used as a bridge to interact with regional and international actors. There is concern among QA professionals in Việt Nam that their higher education system is going to get left behind in the global knowledge economy.

In relation to the APQN’s role in Việt Nam, the survey was able to provide some evidence that the other data collection methods didn’t find. The APQN website is not used that often by the survey participants, and the respondents felt the awareness of the APQN activities and events is moderate. Although the APQN events and activities are well attended and the survey respondents believed that the knowledge gained from these
events and activities is being shared in the country, the survey respondents felt that the APQN activities were not helpful for overcoming national challenges, which seems contradictory to the other data gathered. A possible explanation for this contradiction is the tension between the competing values of neo-liberal policies in a state/protectionist system that Việt Nam is struggling to reconcile.

**Việt Nam, APQN, and Higher Education Regionalization**

This chapter demonstrates the key role that the state still plays, and may always play, in higher education policymaking in Việt Nam. On a national-regional-global linear scale, the textual analysis, key informants, and survey results show that the main focus of the rationales for QA policy is at the international level, using the regional level as a stepping stone to reach the international level. Higher education regionalization for Việt Nam is a pragmatic process used to participate in the global market economy, placing it as a sub-set of globalization. Participation in regional integration activities are only necessary for achieving a comparative advantage and could become unnecessary once Vietnamese higher education has attained an international status.

Regional actors and activities are avenues for better strategies between national and international policymaking, as well as for validating new, and possibly controversial, reform policies. The perspective of higher education regionalization by Vietnamese QA policymakers and higher education institutions is that it strengthens the ties between the national-to-international actors and international-to-national actors.

The Vietnamese QA policymakers and higher education institutions have taken up QA norms and values mainly from the World Bank, with assistance from regional actors such as SEAMEO-RIHED and AUN. The notion of adhering to a regional identity or to regional values is not apparent, although one of the main drivers to connecting at the regional level is to level out the quality of higher education systems in the region in order to be more competitive globally.

MOET officials and higher education institutions are engaging in international initiatives, sometimes with their regional counterparts, to build QA capacity in the country. For Việt Nam, at this point in time, higher education regionalization is primarily
a sub-set of globalization, with the main purpose of regional higher education initiatives as entry points into the global higher education market.

The conflict between international QA norms and the central planning traditions of the SRV creates an “organizational hypocrisy” that situates the Vietnamese QA capacity building between neo-liberal and state/protectionist perspectives of globalization. On the one hand, implementing international norms of QA, in particular those that support the World Bank’s neo-liberal initiatives, involve following practices that at times can be in conflict with its centrally-planned system. The tension between negotiating operational pressures related to its centrally-planned system is best seen in the key informant interviews. In the future, the Vietnamese QA professionals could assert more statist/protectionist values in its negotiations in regional activities, but for the moment, this is an opportunity, not the reality.
Chapter Nine: Conclusion

This study demonstrates that higher education regionalization is a process driven by values about the state, the market, and academe. The APQN, as one example of higher education regionalization, is a dynamic actor in the internationalization and regionalization of QA in Asia and the Pacific. The study started with a conceptual framework of ideal-types of higher education regionalization from which to examine the APQN’s values, norm-setting, and regional identity. Theories of globalization and international relations were used to tease out the values held by the APQN and the international and national actors closely related to it. The purpose of using the APQN as a case study was to provide a case of the values embedded in the processes of higher education regionalization.

The first findings chapter on international organizations examined the World Bank, UNESCO, and INQAAHE, all of which have a strong influence on the QA activities in Asia and the Pacific, and as such, drive much of the APQN’s direction. The normative position of QA has already been established in Asia and the Pacific through three factors: 1) the involvement of norm entrepreneurs (many of whom belong to APQN and INQAAHE), 2) the World Bank’s involvement in higher education capacity building in Asia and the Pacific, and 3) UNESCO’s role in spelling out the international norms of QA through its conventions, declarations, and partner building initiatives.

Each of the three international organizations is characterized by different theoretical perspectives of globalization. The World Bank’s position of restructuring higher education systems to make them more efficient and effective, and flexible enough to adapt to the global market economy show core values related to neo-liberal and liberal international perspectives. Analysis of UNESCO’s position of respecting cultural diversity while promoting cooperation, and partnering with other international organizations, shows tension between these values. UNESCO seems to share liberal international perspectives, with hints of global transformer perspectives on globalization. Both UNESCO and the World Bank define regions from an international standpoint, and as such these two organizations tend to further the notion of higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization. INQAAHE as an organization of
international member organizations, with strong ties to regional networks, values diversity and inter-regional cooperation, which places it in between the institutional reformer and liberal internationalist perspectives.

The GIQAC key informant interviews highlight core values, similar to INQAAHE, of inter-regional cooperation, knowledge-sharing, and building capacity. The expectation of the GIQAC key informants is that there is a distinct regional identity being expressed by the regional QA networks. This perspective on the regional QA networks suggests acceptance of the notion of higher education regionalization as a regional form of internationalization. The findings chapter on international organizations, which provides the international context for the APQN case study, concludes with a recognition of the significant influence the World Bank and UNESCO have in shaping higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization, while noting the possibility of the influences of INQAAHE and GIQAC supporting higher education regionalization as a regional form of internationalization. The regional form of internationalization as an ideal-type of higher education regionalization can be used as an agent of globalization or as a reactor to globalization. Both INQAAHE and GIQAC support the notion of higher educational regionalization as an agent of globalization.

The findings chapter which presented the APQN’s history and activities illustrated a network made up of national actors who are interested in, and actively participate in international discussions of QA. The APQN’s history, membership development, Board members, events and activities, highlight the APQN’s core values as cooperation, equality, and participation in the global market. The strong emphasis on the market economy shows that neo-liberal perspectives are balanced with liberal international perspectives. Based on APQN documents, the perspectives of globalization it mainly ascribes to are liberal international with some neo-liberal perspectives, which held true also for the analysis of the key informant interviews and survey analysis. The policy discourse analysis of the APQN documents revealed that regional identity is defined in reference to participating in international discussions, which is mostly a geographical identity. Because the APQN lacks a clear regional identity, it can’t easily function as a regional version of internationalization, but tends rather to be a sub-set of globalization with the potential of asserting a regional identity once it matures.
The finding chapters of the APQN actors as shared through key informant interviews and survey analysis, highlighted opportunities for further regional collaboration. The key informant interviews stressed the values of cooperation, sharing experiences, learning together, respecting diversity, and building trust. The key informant interviews brought out values of inclusion, respect for cultural diversity, and understanding context, which is less obvious in the policy discourse analysis of APQN events and activities. Similar to the textual analysis, the key informant interviews defined regional identity geographically, and recognized the size and diversity of Asia and the Pacific as a reason for their very loose sense of identity. Its professional identity was clearer than its regional identity.

The survey respondents also emphasized a strong interest in international practices of QA, and the ability of QA policies and practices to align higher education systems to the global market; however, the open-ended comments section suggested the possibility of having a more distinct regional identity. Similar values came out in the open-ended comment sections, such as sharing experiences, learning together, and building trust. On one hand, the survey respondents recognized the value of the APQN to present international practices of QA to the region, and to help regional and national organizations gain credibility on an international scale through their APQN membership. On the other hand, the survey respondents noted a strong interest in regional cooperation, in developing QA for local contexts, and in advocating QA for regional citizenship. More than half of the survey respondents were not members of APQN, which may be seen through the high-level expectations of the APQN to be a disseminator of international practices and networking device with international actors, as well as to be an advocate for meeting local, regional needs, and for developing practices that take into consideration cultural contexts. Members may understand the realities of the APQN’s limited budget and volunteer Board members who do most of the work. Nonetheless, the open-ended survey comments hint at possibly moving towards higher education regionalization as a regional version of internationalization with a more distinct cultural identity.

The embedded case study of Việt Nam, presented in the last chapter, showed one national perspective of QA capacity building and the international and regional organizations assisting in this endeavor. The World Bank plays a very large role in the
development of higher education in Việt Nam, pushing it to adopt neo-liberal practices that align the higher education system more closely with market principles. The centrally planned traditions of the SRV and the MOET create some upheaval in how QA is being implemented. The core values identified in the policy discourse analysis of higher education legislation emphasized market competition, efficiency, and effectiveness. In the key informant interviews, similar core values emerged, such as creativity and innovation, flexibility, and regional integration, which reflect neo-liberal perspectives of globalization; however, core values such as equality and meeting national needs reflect state/protectionist values. Because of the conflicting values experienced in Vietnamese QA policymaking, the notions of higher education regionalization seems to be mostly as a sub-set of globalization, yet the strong nationalist tendencies may influence how Vietnamese engage in higher education regionalization projects. The embedded case study of Việt Nam’s experiences with QA capacity building sheds light on how the Vietnamese APQN member organizations are navigating the globalization of higher education. The core values shared by the QA professionals in Việt Nam support the current notion of the APQN’s higher education regionalization project as a sub-set of globalization. The Vietnamese experiences in other regional organizations such as SEAMEO and AUN may influence future notions of higher education regionalization.

In conclusion, the APQN is an example of higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization, with hints of shifting towards a regional version of internationalization if regional collaboration continues, particularly in Southeast Asia. What can the APQN tell us about higher education regionalization? The embedded case study of Việt Nam shows us that in certain national contexts higher education regionalization is a stepping stone between national and international levels for higher education systems that are not strong enough to participate at the international level.

Since the APQN was started by participants in an international member-based organization, it is likely that it will continue to defer to international assertions of QA, rather than regional assertions of QA. Perhaps regional organizations like AUN and SEAMEO, with strong regional identities and activities, based on core values of resisting global trends of colonization, may provide an example for the APQN on how to defer
more to the national level. Further research on the role of other regional organizations and how they practice higher education regionalization is necessary.

Similar to what we know about multi-lateral organizations, the strength of the regional organization is based on the realities of its members. The more developing countries participate in the APQN, the more there may be resistance to international QA norms, particularly from higher education institutional members. Resistance will look differently based on the agendas and needs of the region. When encompassing all of Asia and the Pacific, as the APQN does, higher education regionalization may always have a generic tone in order to meet all the different culturally, politically, socially, and historically distinct sub-regions. There is potential for Asian Pacific higher education regionalization to introduce ways to assert epistemological concepts of the relationship between the state and academe, which are different from the current (Western) international QA norms.

Areas of Caution in Regional QA Capacity Building in Asia and the Pacific

The main concern with higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization is the potentially homogenizing affect that it may have on developing systems of higher education. In the effort of developing countries to modernize the higher education system by adopting international QA practices, without careful planning or awareness, certain QA practices may elevate and marginalize disciplines creating an uneven development of the higher education system. The incentive grants that the World Bank sponsors may have this unintended consequence.

The underlying principle of this thesis is that higher educational regionalization is a socially constructed process based on the values of its actors and the activities they promote. Higher education regionalization is not a value-neutral process, and as such, the values of actors defining and enacting the process should be made as explicit as possible. Making explicit the values that underpin higher education regionalization can assist in identifying possible conflicts and risks when including new actors or adding new initiatives. Examples of conflicting values can be seen in the Vietnamese embedded case study where values of the World Bank’s QA capacity building are competing with the SRV’s values of central-planning and its tradition of limited systemic diversity. The
World Bank’s rationales for shifting “institutional culture” based on capacity may overlook the underlying values behind central planning and its higher education traditions. Understanding the traditions and the values linked to the processes of higher education regionalization may develop more sustainable regional QA capacity initiatives.

Traditions of knowledge are deeply rooted in Asia and the Pacific, and I am not an expert on the epistemological underpinnings of the civilizations in the Asia Pacific region, yet in this study I could see hints of different epistemological notions of the external review. The current structure of international QA norms includes an internal and an external assessment with an external (objective) review. The external review from an objective party is necessary to protect institutional autonomy and academic freedom in the western sense of these terms. Because there are different epistemological understandings of the state and the academy in Asia and the Pacific, the external review may be conducted quite differently. Clarity in how this external review process meets cultural values will be important as more countries/territories in Asia and the Pacific adopt QA norms.

Future Opportunities for APQN

The APQN is in a strong position internationally, and in a good position regionally. As a leader among the regional QA networks, it contributes professional advice related to business infrastructures, member relations, and event planning. Within the region, as this thesis has demonstrated, its regional identity is based on geographical parameters defined by the World Bank. In the future, the APQN may want to consider elaborating on its regional identity. To elaborate on its regional identity, it may want to build more relationships with sub-regional organizations, particularly those that already have a clear identity. Having more sub-regional organizations as observer members, like the AUN has done, may assist in the process of collaborating on a shared regional identity. Sub-regional networks also may have more practical knowledge of implementing sub-regional initiatives which may be valuable to future APQN activities.

Although the APQN is primarily intended for the networking of QA agencies, the institutional member organizations represent a strong percentage of its membership. These institutional members are currently marginalized in the governance of the APQN,
and should play a greater role in the network. Although there has been some institutional involvement in the APQN projects, more institutional representatives should be included. Higher education consortia could also be encouraged to become members that may provide regional perspectives on the QA process, which may be valuable to the QA agency members.

The survey results indicate that more outreach to low-income countries may be necessary as the responses from low-income countries tended to rank “understanding how to implement QA” lower. The Vietnamese survey respondents offered similar responses. Reaching out to low-income countries, both members and non-members, either through surveys, projects, publications, or specific training during conferences, may be a way to improve the understanding of how to implement QA.

Some of the key informants and open-ended survey responses requested that more theoretical discussions about quality be provided on the website. Offering a view of quality and QA from an Asian Pacific perspective would be a unique contribution to the QA agencies in the region, to higher education institutions in the region, to QA professionals interested in QA in Asia and the Pacific, and to international organizations and international development agencies working on QA capacity building in the region.

Presenting the APQN as an example of higher education regionalization as a subset of globalization may be a pessimistic outcome for some. For others, it may be an obvious reality, given the intense competition over higher education in the region. This thesis presents higher education regionalization as an ever-evolving concept that offers the hope of providing new cultural perspectives of higher education on one hand, and warns about the danger of a further homogenizing of higher education policies and practices on the other hand. The possibilities in this thesis lie in the hands of the actors who shape and construct the process of higher education regionalization. An awareness of the values and intentions of those engaged in the higher education regionalization process can foresee and forestall problems, resulting in a re-steering of the process when necessary.
Avenues for Future Research

The issues in this thesis point to avenues for future research on higher education regionalization, globalization, and QA. First, the case of the APQN focused mainly on the ideal-type of higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization. Brief mention of SEAMEO and the ASEAN University Network in Chapter Eight highlighted sub-regional initiatives that have a stronger regional identity. Looking specifically at how the regional identity of SEAMEO and ASEAN shape higher education regionalization in Southeast Asia may provide a deeper understanding of if regional identity has an impact on higher education policy. Second, the ideal-type of higher education regionalization as an alternative to globalization did not seem to have any traction with the APQN. In my field research I saw very little evidence of regionalization initiatives in Asia and the Pacific that were focused on resisting globalization. Future research into regional higher education initiatives that actively resist globalization can further expand our knowledge of higher education regionalization. Third, the embedded case study of Việt Nam suggested that the ideal-type of higher education regionalization as a sub-set of globalization illustrated ways in which globalization is emphasizing the power of the state. An investigation into how QA supports the shifting role of the state from an arbiter of quality for the national good to an arbiter of quality for the global economy could illuminate new forms of power for the state. Lastly, exploring the epistemological underpinnings of the state, market and academe in relation to the practice of external QA in Confucian heritage societies would contribute to the QA literature and possibly anticipate new norms of QA.
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UNESCO-IIEP. (2010d). External quality assurance for higher education in CIS and South-east European countries Regulating and assuring the quality of cross border providers of higher education (Vol. 5). Paris: UNESCO IIEP.


Appendix A

Table A Coding for Online Course Module

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Codes</th>
<th>Distinct Themes</th>
<th>Final Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Marketization</td>
<td>1. Globalization</td>
<td>1. Challenges of globalization on higher education systems and the role QA plays in mitigating these problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Globalization</td>
<td>2. Regionalization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Transnational activities</td>
<td>3. Drivers and rationales for national development</td>
<td>2. Why QA is important for national systems of higher education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Transnational education</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. International Level</td>
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<td>6. Regionalization</td>
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<td>7. Dynamics of influence</td>
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<td>8. References to APQN</td>
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<td>9. National development</td>
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<td>10. Online learning</td>
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<td>11. Educational providers</td>
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<td>12. Expansion of higher education</td>
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<td>13. Capacity building</td>
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<td>14. Qualifications framework</td>
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<td>15. Mechanisms for control</td>
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<td>16. Regulatory instruments</td>
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<td>17. Legislation</td>
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<td>18. Funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Stakeholders</td>
<td>4. Important actors</td>
<td>3. Aligning definitions of quality and the objectives for QA to the national context</td>
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<td>20. Governing bodies</td>
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<td>21. Professions</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. QA Agencies</td>
<td>5. National values, interests and objectives for QA</td>
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<td>23. National values and interests</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Trust</td>
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<td>25. Diversity</td>
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<td>26. Equity</td>
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<td>27. Trade</td>
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<td>28. Competition</td>
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<td>29. Mediating risks to students</td>
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<td>31. Transparency</td>
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<td>32. Accountability</td>
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<td>33. Autonomy</td>
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<td>34. Self-assessment</td>
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<td>35. Self-improvement</td>
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<td>36. Self-regulation</td>
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<tr>
<td>37. Develop or adhere to good practice standards</td>
<td>7. Develop or adhere to good practice standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>38. Loose definitions</td>
<td>8. Loose definitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>39. Instruments for QA</td>
<td>9. Instruments for QA</td>
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<tr>
<td>40. Quality Audit</td>
<td>5. Definitions, instruments, and functions of QA agencies</td>
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<td>41. Accreditation</td>
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<td>42. Quality assessment</td>
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<td>43. Credibility</td>
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<td>44. Quantification</td>
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<td>45. Expert knowledge</td>
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<td>46. QA objectives</td>
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<td>47. Quality control</td>
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<td>48. Improvement</td>
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<td>49. Indicators of quality</td>
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<td>50. Learning Outcomes</td>
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<td>51. Benchmarking</td>
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<td>52. Standards</td>
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<tr>
<td>53. Definitions of quality</td>
<td>10. Definitions of quality &amp; QA</td>
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<td>54. Quality as exceptional</td>
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<td>55. Fitness for purpose</td>
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<tr>
<td>56. Definitions of QA</td>
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<td>57. Objectivity</td>
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<td>58. Functions of QA agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>59. Data management</td>
<td>11. Functions of QA agency</td>
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<td>60. Decision making</td>
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<td>61. Reducing conflict of interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>62. External review</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>63. Debates about quality</td>
<td>12. Debates about QA</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Debates about QA</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Request to Participate Letter with Consent Form

To the participants in this study,

I am a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. Currently I am conducting research for my doctoral dissertation on regional networks of quality assurance, specifically the Asia Pacific Quality Assurance Network. The title of my project is *The Regionalization of Quality Assurance in Higher Education: A Case Study of the Asia Pacific Quality Network.*

The study looks at the roles that regional quality assurance (QA) networks have in defining and supporting regional, national, and local knowledge as well as establishing international norms of quality assurance. There are three points of data collection in my study: collecting organizational documents for textual analysis, participant observation at conferences and training activities, and key informant interviews of personnel in international agencies, regional networks, national ministries of education, and universities or other non-governmental organizations involved in discussions of quality assurance of higher education.

This international study will be carried out in countries that hold membership in the Asia Pacific Quality Network under the supervision of Professor Ruth Hayhoe, Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education, The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education/University of Toronto. The data is being collected for the purposes of a PhD thesis and perhaps for subsequent research articles.

Participation in this study can benefit you and your organization in the opportunity it provides to articulate the regional dimensions of QA. Current emphases on the internationalization of QA may overshadow the important phenomenon of regionalization, which highlights unique cultural notions of QA. Because of the newness of regional QA networks, having your on-the-ground perception of the activities of the APQN can clarify how it supports the internationalization and/or regionalization of QA. With limited literature available on this topic, your participation will help fill in gaps in the scholarly literature and help the academic community gain a deeper understanding of the regional dimensions to QA in higher education.

Our interview should last between 30 minutes to an hour. I would like to tape our interview, with your permission. If you would prefer that I not tape our session, please let me know before our interview. The questions will focus on the main actors who are...
defining quality assurance at the national, regional and international levels and how the APQN is promoting QA. I am also interested in learning about the challenges to implementing QA standards. As the interview proceeds, I may ask questions for clarification or further understanding, but my part will be mainly to listen to you speak about your views, experiences, and the reasons you believe the things you do. After the interview, I will write brief notes that will be used to assist me in remembering the surroundings of the interview (i.e., characteristics of the site).

You are under no obligation to participate in my study. During our interview you, are free to refuse to answer any of the questions that you are not comfortable answering. You may at any time refuse to answer a question or withdraw from the interview process. If, after our interview, you decide to withdraw from my study, please contact me and I will destroy my notes and all data collected. If you wish, I am happy to send you the electronic copy of our interview. At no time will value judgments be placed on your responses nor will any evaluation be made of your effectiveness in your organization.

It is the intention that each interview will be audio taped and later transcribed to paper. In order to keep the interview anonymous, in my personal notes I will assign a number to you that will correspond to your interviews and transcriptions. If you wish, I can send you your transcript in order for you to add any further information or to correct any misinterpretations that could result. All information will be reported in such a way that individual persons cannot be identified. All raw data (i.e. transcripts, field notes) will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study.

The tape and transcripts will be kept in a safe location in my home office for further analysis. Only my supervisor and myself will have access to the tapes and transcripts. Your identity will be kept confidential and not used in the final study, in publications or presentations, unless you wish that your name be used. At the bottom of this form there is a place for you to indicate you are interested in having your name used in my study.

Upon completion of the study, I plan to post the research on a website. When that time comes, I will notify you of the URL, so that you have access to the final results.

Please feel free to share this information letter and website with your supervisor and/or others in your organization.

My contact information as well as the contact information of my advisor and the ethical review board at the University of Toronto is as follows:

Meggan Madden
Meggan.madden@utoronto.ca
647-345-7175
83 Elm Ave. #309
Toronto, ON M4W1P1

Prof. Ruth Hayhoe
Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Meggan Madden

By signing below, you are indicating that you are willing to participate in the study, you have received a copy of this letter, and you are fully aware of the conditions above.

Name: ________________________________

Signed: ____________________________ Date: ________________

Please initial if you agree to have your interview audiotaped: _____

Please initial if you agree to have your name used in the study: _____

Please keep a copy of this letter for your records.
Appendix C

Key Informant Interview Guide

Sample questions are as follows:

In your opinion, who are the main actors defining national, regional, and international quality assurance policies?

What does your country hope to achieve from having a QA system?

How often do you talk to other APQN members? Who do you talk to?

What QA practices and policies does your country use? What other countries are you referring to when building your countries QA capacity?

What are some of the challenges that your country, or this region, faces with implementing QA? How does the APQN help with overcoming these challenges?

What are the rationales for your organization’s involvement in the APQN?

What are some of the unique aspects of higher education in your region?

Are there any documents that I may have access to that describe the purpose of quality assurance within the local, national or regional context that may be of use to my research?

What are the best practices and policies you learned in your training sessions with the APQN? How well do you think these can be implemented in your home institution? In your Ministry of Education?

What are some of the outcomes from your participation in APQN activities?

From your perspective, what impact, if any, do international and regional actors in quality assurance have on national policies of quality assurance?

What more do you think APQN could do to help developing countries establish QA policies and practices?
### Appendix D

**Table D First and Final Themes of Key Informant Coding Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GIQAC</th>
<th>APQN</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Initial Theme</strong></td>
<td><strong>Final Theme</strong></td>
<td><strong>Initial Theme</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. QA understanding</td>
<td>1. QA understanding</td>
<td>1. QA understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Challenges for QA</td>
<td>2. Challenges to QA capacity building</td>
<td>2. Challenges to QA capacity building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Challenges developing countries face</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Regional Cooperation</td>
<td>3. Inter-regional and international QA collaboration</td>
<td>3. Regional identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>6. Sub-regions</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. QA capacity building</td>
<td>4. QA capacity building</td>
<td>5. Donor organizations role in capacity development</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Actors who should be involved in QA</td>
<td>6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Sustainability and importance of funding regional QA networks</td>
<td>7.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>GIQAC operations</td>
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</table>
Appendix E

English and Vietnamese Versions of Survey Questionnaire

Welcome message

Thank you for your participation in this survey on the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN). Based on your interest in the APQN network, as indicated by your subscription to its mailing list, this questionnaire is intended clarify how the APQN contributes to building capacity for QA in higher education, specifically in how it assists developing countries in the region.

The survey will take 5-10 minutes to complete.

The survey has been approved by the University of Toronto's Ethical Review Board. The findings will be used for a PhD thesis and possible subsequent academic articles. It is anonymous. Your voluntary participation is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your participation.

Individual information

How long have you been interested in quality assurance (QA) in higher education?

I'm not involved in the quality assurance of higher education
Less than one year
Between one to two years
Between three to five years
Between six to ten years
Between eleven to twenty years
Over twenty years

What is the highest level of education you have obtained?

Some primary school
Completion of primary school
Some secondary school
Secondary school diploma
Some post-secondary education
Undergraduate diploma (e.g. Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Arts)
Some Graduate study
Graduate degree (e.g. Master of Arts, Master of Education, Master of Science)
Terminal degree (e.g. PhD, Law Degree)
Please indicate your sex:
Male
Female

**Participation in APQN event**
How many times have you participated in an APQN event, like a workshop, conference, or online course:
Once
Twice
Three to Four Times
Five to Seven Times
Over Seven Times
Never
IF Never, THEN SKIP TO OPINION DATA

**APQN activity sponsor**
Who sponsored your participation in these activities? *(please check all that apply)* [check boxes to allow for multiple answers]
Myself
My organization
Another organization in my country/territory
An international organization
A regional body
If you had multiple sponsors, please name the sponsor who contributed the most financially towards your participation *(OPEN TEXTBOX)*

**Opinion about APQN activities**
Please indicate the degree of awareness of the APQN activities (such as website, workshops, online courses) in your country/territory.

Very High
High
Not High, Not Low
Low
Very Low
Don’t Know
Please Comment: [open textbox]

Please indicate your opinion about the following statement:
The knowledge gained via APQN activities (e.g. how to conduct self-evaluations, how to implement an external review, establishing legal frameworks for QA,) is shared among organizations within my country/territory:

Strong Agree
Agree
Neutral
Disagree
Strongly Disagree
Don’t Know
Please Comment: [open textbox]

**APQN website**
How often do you visit the APQN website?
Once a day
One to four times a week
Once a week
One to three times a month
Once a month
One to eleven times a year
Once a year
Never
Please feel free to comment:

What information do you use on the APQN website? [check all that apply]
Expert Database
Workshop Materials
Conference Proceedings
Events Calendar
Other [textbox for response]

**APQN membership**
Is your organization a member of APQN? Yes/No

**IF ANSWER NO, THEN SKIP NEXT QUESTION**

**APQN members-only section of the website**
How often do you access the APQN website and use the members-only section?
[radio buttons to allow for only one response]
Once a day
One to four times a week
Once a week
One to three times a month
Once a month
One to eleven times a year
Once a year
I didn’t know there was a members-only section
I don’t use the website
Please feel free to comment:
**APQN events & activities**

To what extent have you gained the following from the APQN activities:

*(please respond yes or no to every choice listed)*

I have exchanged ideas with QA experts:

*not at all, a little, moderately, a lot, profoundly*

I learned about international practices of QA

*not at all, a little, moderately, a lot, profoundly*

I learned about other QA training activities

*not at all, a little, moderately, a lot, profoundly*

I learned about QA policy and reform

*not at all, a little, moderately, a lot, profoundly*

I learned techniques for overcoming challenges with QA in our national system

*not at all, a little, moderately, a lot, profoundly*

I networked with other countries in my geographical region

*not at all, a little, moderately, a lot, profoundly*

I understood how to implement QA

*not at all, a little, moderately, a lot, profoundly*

Comments: [textbox for fill in answer]

**Interest in APQN**

Please explain why you or your organization is interested in the APQN.

[Comment box]

**Organizational information**
Please identify what type(s) of organization(s) you belong to (please select all that apply):

- Governmental Department
- Non-governmental Organization (domestic)
- Higher Education Institution
- Consortium of Higher Education Institutions
- Regional Governmental Organization
- Regional Non-Governmental Organization
- International Organization
- International Non-Governmental Organization
- Private Sector
- Other

Please list type: [textbox]

**Country/Territory information**

What is the economic status of your country/territory? [radio buttons]

- High income economy (gross national income per capita is more than $11,906 USD)
- Upper middle income economy (gross national income per capita is between and $3,856 and $11,905 USD)
- Lower middle income economy (gross national income per capita is between $976 and $3855 USD)
- Low income economy (gross national income per capita is below $975)

What are the main practices of QA in your country/territory? (Please check all that apply):

- [ checkboxes that allow for multiple answers ]
  - Audit
  - Accreditation
  - Assessment of Learning Outcomes
  - Peer-Review
  - Performance Indicators
  - None Exist at the Moment
I Don’t Know
Other [Textbox]

In your country/territory, how is the QA body affiliated with the government?

It is within the government, i.e., the Ministry/Department of Education
It is a department that has some autonomy from the Ministry, but receives funding from it.
It is an external non-governmental organization, autonomous from the Ministry.
None exists at the moment
I don’t know
Other: Please explain [open ended textbox]

Possible future contributions of the APQN

1. What type of QA capacity building activities would you like the APQN to consider implementing in the future?

Thank you

Thank you for your participation in this survey on the APQN. Your responses will help provide a fuller understanding of how the members and non-members of the APQN can benefit from and contribute to its capacity building activities.

If you have further questions about the use of this survey, please contact the principal investigator at: meggan.madden@utoronto.ca.

Lời mở đầu

Xin chân thành cảm ơn ông/bà đã tham gia vào khảo sát này về Mạng lưới Chất lượng Châu Á-Thái Bình Dương (APQN). Dựa trên mối quan tâm của Ông/Bà về mạng lưới APQN, được thể hiện qua việc Ông/Bà đăng ký vào danh sách thư của mạng lưới này, bảng hỏi này được thiết kế với mục đích làm rõ việc APQN đóng góp như thế nào đối với công tác tăng cường năng lực về đảm bảo chất lượng trong giáo dục đại học, đặc biệt là việc mạng lưới này hỗ trợ như thế nào đối với các nước đang phát triển trong khu vực.

The survey will take 5-10 minutes to complete.

Bảng hỏi này mất từ 5 đến 10 phút để hoàn thành.

Khảo sát này đã được duyệt bởi Hội đồng Thẩm định của trường Đại học Toronto. Các kết quả từ điều tra này sẽ được sử dụng cho một luận án tiến sĩ và có thể sau đó sẽ là một
số bài báo khoa học. Người tham gia khảo sát sẽ hoàn toàn được giữ tên. Tới xin bày tỏ lòng cảm kích về việc tự nguyện tham gia khảo sát của Ông/Bà.

Xin chân thành cảm ơn sự cống tâc của ông/bà.

**Thông tin cá nhân**

1. Ông bà đã tham gia vào vấn đề đảm bảo chất lượng (AQ) trong giáo dục từ khi nào?

   - Tới không liên quan tới công tác đảm bảo chất lượng giáo dục đại học
   - Ít hơn một năm
   - Từ một đến hai năm
   - Từ ba đến năm năm
   - Từ sáu đến mười năm
   - Từ mười một đến hai mươi năm
   - Hơn hai mươi năm

2. Trình độ học vấn cao nhất của ông/bà là gì?

   - Giáo dục cơ sở
   - Hoàn thành giáo dục cơ sở
   - Giáo dục phổ thông trung học
   - Tốt nghiệp phổ thông trung học
   - Giáo dục đại học
   - Bằng cử nhân đại học (ví dụ: Cử nhân Khoa học, Cử nhân Giáo dục, Cử nhân Nghệ thuật)
   - Sau đại học
   - Bằng Sau đại học (ví dụ: Thạc sĩ Nghệ thuật, Thạc sĩ Giáo dục, Thạc sĩ Khoa học)
   - Bằng cao nhất (ví dụ: Tiến sĩ, bằng Luật)

**Thông tin cá nhân**

Giới tính:
- Nam
- Nữ

**Tham gia hoạt động của APQN**

1. Xin hãy liệt kê số lần ông/bà đã tham gia vào các hoạt động của APQN như một khóa học, hội thảo hay khóa đào tạo trực tuyến:

   - Một lần
   - Hai lần
   - Ba đến bốn lần
   - Năm đến bảy lần
   - Hơn bảy lần
   - Chưa bao giờ
Tài trợ cho Hoạt động của APQN

Ai tài trợ cho việc tham gia của ông/bà trong các hoạt động này? (xin hãy lựa chọn tất cả những đáp án phù hợp)
- Tổ chức của tôi
- Một tổ chức khác trong đất nước của tôi
- Một tổ chức quốc tế
- Một tổ chức khu vực
- Không có thông tin

Nếu có nhiều nhà tài trợ, xin ông/bà cho biết tên của tổ chức tài trợ có đóng góp nhiều nhất về tài chính cho việc tham gia của ông/bà

Quan điểm về các hoạt động của APQN

Xin hãy cho biết mức độ hiểu biết của ông/bà về các hoạt động của APQN (ví dụ: trang web, các hội thảo, các khóa đào tạo trực tuyến) ở đất nước/vùng lãnh thổ của ông/bà.

- Rất cao
- Cao
- Không cao, Không thấp
- Thấp
- Rất thấp
- Không biết

Xin hãy cho biết quan điểm của ông/bà về ý kiến dưới đây:

Các kiến thức thu nhận được thông qua các hoạt động của APQN đang đi dần vào các tổ chức ở Việt Nam

- Rất đồng ý
- Đồng ý
- Không đồng ý cũng không phản đối
- Không đồng ý
- Rất không đồng ý
- Không biết

Trang web của APQN

Mức độ thường xuyên ông/bà truy cập vào trang web của APQN như thế nào?

- Mỗi ngày một lần
- Hai đến bốn lần một tuần
- Mỗi tuần một lần
Hai đến bốn lần một tháng
Mỗi tháng một lần
Một đến mười một lần một năm
Mỗi năm một lần
Tôi không biết có chuyên mục dành riêng cho các thành viên
Tôi không sử dụng trang web này

Xin ông/bà hãy cho biết thêm ý kiến:

Ông/bà sử dụng thông tin gì trên trang web của APQN?

- Lịch sự kiện
- Cơ sở dữ liệu chuyên gia
- Các kỷ yếu hội thảo
- Các tài liệu tập huấn
- Khác

Thành viên APQN

- Có quan của ông/bà có phải là thành viên của APQN không?
  Có  Không
IF ANSWER Không, THEN SKIP NEXT QUESTION

Các thành viên APQN
Xin hãy cho biết lý do vì sao ông/bà hoặc tổ chức của ông/bà quan tâm tới APQN.
[Comment box]

Mức độ thường xuyên ông/bà truy cập trang web của APQN và sử dụng chuyên mục dành riêng cho các thành viên như thế nào?

- Mỗi ngày một lần
- Một đến bốn lần một tuần
- Mỗi tuần một lần
- Một đến ba lần một tháng
- Mỗi tháng một lần
- Một đến mười một lần một năm
- Mỗi năm một lần
Tôi không biết là có chuyên mục dành riêng cho các thành viên
Tôi không sử dụng trang web này

Xin ông/bà hãy cho biết thêm ý kiến:

Các Sự kiện và Hoạt động của APQN

Ông/bà đã gặt hái được các lợi ích sau từ các hoạt động của APQN ở mức độ như thế nào:
Tôi đã trao đổi ý kiến với các chuyên gia về đảm bảo chất lượng:
*Hoàn toàn không, một chút, tương đối, rất nhiều, rất sâu sắc*

Tôi hiểu biết thêm về các thực hành đảm bảo chất lượng quốc tế
*Hoàn toàn không, một chút, tương đối, rất nhiều, rất sâu sắc*

Tôi hiểu biết thêm về các hoạt động đào tạo khác về đảm bảo chất lượng
*Hoàn toàn không, một chút, tương đối, rất nhiều, rất sâu sắc*

Tôi nắm bắt được về chính sách và đổi mới trong đảm bảo chất lượng
*Hoàn toàn không, một chút, tương đối, rất nhiều, rất sâu sắc*

Tôi học được các kỹ thuật khắc phục một số khó khăn trong công tác đảm bảo chất lượng đối với hệ thống quốc gia của chúng tôi
*Hoàn toàn không, một chút, tương đối, rất nhiều, rất sâu sắc*

Tôi đã mở rộng mạng lưới quan hệ với các nước khác trong khu vực
*Hoàn toàn không, một chút, tương đối, rất nhiều, rất sâu sắc*

Tôi hiểu biết về cách thức tiến hành đảm bảo chất lượng
*Hoàn toàn không, một chút, tương đối, rất nhiều, rất sâu sắc*

Xin ông/bà hãy cho biết thêm ý kiến:

**Thông tin về tổ chức**

Xin ông/bà cho biết loại hình tổ chức mà ông/bà đang làm việc cho (*xin hãy lựa chọn tất cả những đáp án phù hợp*):

- Cơ quan nhà nước
- Tổ chức phi chính phủ (trong nước)
- Cơ sở giáo dục đại học
- Liên hiệp các cơ sở giáo dục đại học
- Tổ chức chính phủ của khu vực
- Tổ chức phi chính phủ khu vực
- Tổ chức quốc tế
- Tổ chức phi chính phủ quốc tế
Khu vực tư nhân
Khác

Các khả năng đóng góp trong tương lai của APQN

Trong tương lai, ông/bà muốn APQN xem xét tiến hành các loại hình hoạt động nào về tăng cường năng lực đảm bảo chất lượng?

Các chính sách quan trọng về đảm bảo chất lượng đối với Việt Nam

Xin ông/bà cho biết những chính sách giáo dục đại học quan trọng phân ánh các quyết định liên quan đến các chính sách và thực hành trong công tác đảm bảo chất lượng ở Việt Nam:
- Chính sách thứ nhất
- Chính sách thứ hai
- Chính sách thứ ba

Ông/bà đã bao giờ sử dụng những tài liệu sau trong việc định hướng các chính sách và thực hành về đảm bảo chất lượng của Việt Nam?

- Bộ công cụ hướng dẫn về Giáo dục Đại học qua Biên giới của UNESCO và APQN
  Có  Không  Tôi không biết
  Thông cáo Brisbane
  Có  Không  Tôi không biết

- Các nguyên tắc Chiba
  Có  Không  Tôi không biết

1. Xin chân thành cảm ơn
Xin chân thành cảm ơn ông/bà đã tham gia vào khảo sát về mạng lưới APQN. Các trả lời của ông/bà sẽ giúp cung cấp một cái nhìn đầy đủ hơn về tình hình của các tổ chức thành viên và phi thành viên, những người được hưởng lợi từ các hoạt động nâng cao năng lực của mạng lưới APQN.

Nếu ông/bà có thêm các câu hỏi về việc sử dụng khảo sát, xin hãy liên hệ với người nghiên cứu cuộc chiến theo địa chỉ: meggan.madden@utoronto.ca.
Appendix F

Survey Invitations and Follow Up Requests (English and Vietnamese)

**English version: Initial invitation**

Subject:
Survey on the APQN’s Contribution to Capacity Building in the Region

DATE

I am a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. Currently I am conducting research for my doctoral dissertation on the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN).

This email is to ask for your help in my data collection process. Part of the data collection includes conducting an online survey of the APQN’s mailing list to understand the contributions that the APQN makes to quality assurance capacity building in the Asia Pacific region. The questions will focus on how the APQN is contributing to QA capacity building. The survey is anonymous.

The online survey should take 5-10 minutes to complete. To access the survey, please click on this link or cut and paste it into your browser:
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8PNB87G

This survey has been approved by the University of Toronto’s Ethical Review Board. You are under no obligation to participate. During the survey you are free to refuse to answer any of the questions that you are not comfortable answering. You may at any time refuse to withdraw from the questionnaire process. There are no questions related to your position within your organization.

Participation in this study can benefit you and your organization in the opportunity it provides to articulate the activities of the APQN. With limited literature available on the topic of regional networks and quality assurance capacity building, this study hopes to fill in gaps in the scholarly literature and to help the academic community gain a deeper understanding of the regional dimensions to QA in higher education.

Your participation in this survey indicates consent to use your answers for my data collection. Upon completion of the study, I plan to post the research on a website. If you are interested in obtaining the results, please email me.

Please feel free to share this survey with your supervisor and/or others in your organization.
Below you will find contact information for myself, my advisor, and for the University of Toronto’s Ethical Review Board. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Meggan Madden
Meggan.madden@utoronto.ca
647-345-7175
83 Elm Ave. #309
Toronto, ON M4W1P1

Prof. Ruth Hayhoe
hayhoe@bellsouth.net
416-978-1213
252 Bloor St. West
Toronto, ON M5S 1V6

University of Toronto Ethical Review Office
Ethics.review@utoronto.ca
416-946-3273

English Version: Survey invitation follow-up request

Subject: Please Complete an Online Survey on the Asia Pacific Quality Network

DATE

This email request is going to subscribers to the APQN mailing list. Recently I sent you an email asking you to respond to a brief online survey about your interests in and experiences with the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN).

Your responses to this survey are important to understanding how the APQN is contributing, and how it can improve its contribution, to quality assurance capacity building.

If you have already completed the survey, I want to thank you for your participation.

If you have not yet responded, I would like to urge you to complete the survey. Your opinion is important.

Please click on this link to go to the survey website (or copy and paste the survey link in your web browser): http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8PNB87G

The survey will take 5-10 minutes to complete.
Vietnamese version: Initial invitation

Tiêu đề: Khảo sát về Đóng góp của APQN đối với Công tác Tăng cường Năng lực trong Khu vực

DATE

Kính gửi Ông (Mr.) "Name of Participant",  
Kính gửi Bà (Ms.) "Name of Participant",  

Tôi là một nghiên cứu sinh của Viện Nghiên cứu Giáo dục Ontario thuộc trường Đại học Toronto. Hiện nay tôi đang tiến hành nghiên cứu cho luận án tiến sĩ của mình về Mạng lưới Đảm bảo Chất lượng Châu Á Thái Bình Dương (APQN).  

Tôi gửi thư này xin nhận được sự giúp đỡ của ông/bà cho quá trình thu thập dữ liệu của tôi. Một phần của việc thu thập dữ liệu bao gồm việc thực hiện một điều tra trực tuyến đối với các thành viên trong danh sách thư của APQN nhằm tìm hiểu về những đóng góp của APQN trong việc tăng cường năng lực về đảm bảo chất lượng trong khu vực Châu Á Thái Bình Dương. Các câu hỏi sẽ tập trung vào việc APQN đóng góp như thế nào đối với việc tăng cường năng lực về đảm bảo chất lượng. Thông tin về người tham gia khảo sát sẽ hoàn toàn được bảo mật.  

Điều tra trực tuyến này mất từ 5 đến 10 phút để hoàn thành. Để truy cập vào bản khảo sát này, xin ông/bà nhập URL sau vào đường dẫn hoặc cắt và dán đường dẫn vào khu vực tên miền: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WD83WWX.

Khảo sát này được duyệt bởi Hội đồng Thẩm định của trường Đại học Toronto. Ông/bà không có bất kỳ một trách nhiệm bắt buộc nào trong việc tham gia vào điều tra này. Trong quá trình khảo sát, ông/bà hoàn toàn có quyền từ chối trả lời bất cứ câu hỏi nào mà ông/bà cảm thấy không thoải mái trong việc trả lời. Ông/bà có thể từ chối và rút
ra khỏi quá trình trả lời khảo sát tại bất cứ thời điểm nào. Sẽ hoàn toàn không có một câu hỏi nào liên quan đến vị trí công tác của ông/bà tại cơ quan của ông/bà.

Tham gia vào khảo sát này, ông/bà cũng như tổ chức của ông/bà có thể thu được các lợi ích từ cơ hội mà nó đem lại trong việc xâu kết các hoạt động của APQN. Các nghiên cứu về đề tài mạng lưới khu vực và tăng cường năng lực trong đảm bảo chất lượng hiện chưa có nhiều, nghiên cứu này hy vọng sẽ khơi dậy những thinterested trong các nghiên cứu gần đây và giúp cộng đồng học thuật hiểu biết sâu hơn về các yếu tố khu vực trong hoạt động đảm bảo chất lượng giáo dục đại học.

Việc tham gia của ông/bà vào khảo sát này đồng nghĩa với việc ông/bà cho phép sử dụng các câu trả lời của mình trong bộ dữ liệu của tôi. Sau khi hoàn thành nghiên cứu này, tôi dự định sẽ đăng tải nghiên cứu trên một trang web. Nếu ông/bà quan tâm tới các kết quả nghiên cứu, xin vui lòng gửi thư điện tử cho tôi.

Ông/bà có thể chia sẻ bản khảo sát này với thủ trưởng và/hoặc các đồng nghiệp khác trong cơ quan của ông/bà.

Dưới đây là thông tin về địa chỉ liên lạc của tôi cũng như của giáo sư hướng dẫn và Hội đồng Thẩm định của tôi tại trường Đại học Toronto. Xin chân thành cảm ơn sự tham gia và giúp đỡ của ông/bà.

Trân trọng,

Meggan Madden
Meggan.madden@utoronto.ca
647-345-7175
83 Elm Ave. #309
Toronto, ON M4W1P1
I am a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. Currently I am conducting research for my doctoral dissertation on the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN).

This email is to ask for your help in my data collection process. Part of the data collection includes conducting an online survey of the APQN’s mailing list to understand the contributions that the APQN makes to quality assurance capacity building in the Asia Pacific region. The questions will focus on how the APQN is contributing to QA capacity building. The survey is anonymous.

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Your participation in this survey indicates consent to use your answers for my data collection. Upon completion of the study, I plan to post the research on a website. If you are interested in obtaining the results, please email me.

Please feel free to share this survey with your supervisor and/or others in your organization.

Below you will find contact information for myself, my advisor, and for the University of Toronto’s Ethical Review Board. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,
DATE

Ngày

Mời đây tôi đã gửi tới Ông/Bà một bức thư điện tử đề nghị Ông/Bà trả lời giúp một khảo sát trực tuyến ngắn về mối quan tâm cùng như những kinh nghiệm của Ông/Bà đối với Mạng lưới Chất lượng Châu Á-Thái Bình Dương (APQN). Các câu trả lời của Ông/Bà cho khảo sát này có ý nghĩa quan trọng đối với việc tìm hiểu về vai trò của APQN đối với công tác tăng cường năng lực trong đảm bảo chất lượng.

Nếu Ông/Bà đã hoàn thành việc trả lời khảo sát, tôi xin chân thành cảm ơn sự công tác của Ông/Bà. Nếu Ông/Bà chưa trả lời, tôi kinh hối Ông/Bà sẽ dành thời gian hoàn thành khảo sát. Tôi dự định sẽ kết thúc khảo sát này vào tuần sau, do đó tôi mong muốn dành cơ hội tham gia trả lời khảo sát tới các thành viên chưa trả lời.

Để truy cập vào điều tra này, xin ông/bà nhập khẩu vào đường dẫn này (hoặc cắt và dán đường dẫn vào khu vực tên miền):
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WD83WWX.

Xin chân thành cảm ơn trước Ông/Bà đã hoàn thành khảo sát. Các câu trả lời của Ông/Bà rất quan trọng đối với việc tìm hiểu về các hoạt động của APQN.
Trân trọng,

Meggan Madden  
Nghiên cứu sinh, Chuyên ngành Giáo dục Đại học  
Viện Nghiên cứu Giáo dục Ontario  
Trường Đại học Toronto

Recently I sent you an email asking you to respond to a brief online survey about your interests in and experiences with the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN). Your responses to this survey are important to understanding the role the APQN plays in quality assurance capacity building.

If you have already completed the survey, I want to thank you for your participation. If you have not yet responded, I would like to urge you to complete the survey. I plan to end the survey next week, so I wish to give everyone who has not yet responded the opportunity to participate in the survey.

Please click on this link to go to the survey website (or copy and paste the survey link in your web browser): http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/WD83WWX.

Thank you in advance for completing the survey. Your responses are important to understanding the activities of the APQN.

Sincerely,

Meggan Madden  
PhD Candidate, Higher Education  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education  
University of Toronto
Appendix G

University of Toronto Ethical Protocol

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
Office of the Vice-President, Research
Office of Research Ethics

ANNUAL RENEWAL OF ETHICS APPROVAL APPLICATION

1. TITLE OF RESEARCH PROJECT

THE REGIONALIZATION OF QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
A CASE STUDY OF THE ASIA PACIFIC QUALITY NETWORK

Protocol Reference #: 23725  Original Approval Date: 1/27/2009
Previous Reference #:  Previous Renewal Date: 1/27/2010

2. INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION

Investigator:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title: Ms</th>
<th>Name: Meggan Madden</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department (or organization if not affiliated with U of T): Theory and Policy Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing address: 83 Elm Ave. #309 Toronto, ON M4W1P1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 416-856-2784</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:meggan.madden@utoronto.ca">meggan.madden@utoronto.ca</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of Project

- Faculty Research
- CBR/CBPR Research
- Post-Doctoral Research
- Student Research: Doctoral  Masters  Student Number

Faculty Supervisor/Sponsor:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title: Dr.</th>
<th>Name: Ruth Hayhoe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department (or organization if not affiliated with U of T): Theory and Policy Studies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mailing address: 252 Bloor St. West Toronto, ON M5S 1V6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone: 416-978-1213</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:hayhoe@bellsouth.net">hayhoe@bellsouth.net</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. LOCATION(S) WHERE THE RESEARCH WILL BE CONDUCTED:

- University of Toronto  
- Hospital  specify site(s)  
- School board or community agency  specify site(s)
Community within the GTA ☐ specify site(s)
International ☒ specify site(s) Hanoi, Vietnam, Bangkok, Thailand, Paris, France
Other ☐ specify site(s)

4. OTHER RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD APPROVAL(S)

a) Does the research involve another institution or site?  Yes ☐ No ☒
b) Has any other REB renewed the ethics approval for this project?  Yes ☐ No ☐

If Yes, please provide a copy of the approval letter with this application.

5. FUNDING STATUS

a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funded *</th>
<th>Agency:</th>
<th>Fund #:</th>
<th>(6 digits)</th>
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<td>Fund #: 4</td>
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| Funding Period: | Year 1 ☐ Year 2 ☐ Year 3 ☒ Year 4 ☐ Other |

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<tr>
<th>Unfunded ☐</th>
<th>Agency:</th>
<th>Submission date:</th>
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</table>

If unfunded, please provide an explanation why no funding is needed?

*b) If funded, are funds administered through UofT Research Services?  Yes ☐ No ☒

c) If “No,” what site/institution administers the funds?

6. PROJECT INFORMATION

a) Have there been any changes to the study protocol, consent process or documents since the most recent approval?  Yes ☐ No ☒

If Yes, please submit an Amendment Form with your application. Revised procedures may not be used until approved. Please note that this does not refer to already approved amendments.

b) Have there been any changes in research personnel who interact with participants and/or have access to personal data?  Yes ☐ No ☒

If Yes, please list former/new personnel and position:
c) What is the current status of the study?

☒ Research participants are currently being recruited/participating.
  Provide start and end dates (estimated): March 2009 – March 2011

☐ Research participants will be recruited/participate.
  Provide start and end dates (estimated):

☐ Research participant involvement has been completed.

☐ The study is closed. (Please complete the Study Completion Report)

☐ This study involves secondary data analysis only.

If Annual Renewal 4 of 4: If recruitment or data collection continues beyond 5 years from your original ethics approval, you will be required to submit a new application for review by the appropriate REB. Please refer to your 5-digit ethics protocol number in the title of your new ethics submission.

d) How many research participants are currently in the study? 40

e) How many research participants have completed the study? 183

f) Did any research participants actively withdraw from the study? Yes ☐ No ☒
  
  If Yes please describe circumstances below, use additional page(s) if necessary.


g) Since receiving original ethics approval, have any ethical concerns (minor or major) arisen?

  Yes ☐ No ☒
  
  If Yes, please describe concerns in detail, use additional page(s) if necessary.


h) Have there been any adverse or unanticipated events?

  Yes ☐ No ☒
  
  If Yes, please submit an Adverse/Unanticipated Event Report Form as soon as possible.


7. STUDY SUMMARY, PROGRESS AND RESULTS
Provide a brief summary of study progress, and results. Use additional page(s) if necessary.

The amendment to the protocol, approved in February 2010, included an online survey that has been completed by 154 participants. There are another 40 potential participants who will be contacted to complete the online survey during December 2010.

29 key informants have also participated in the qualitative portion of the study.

8. SIGNATURES

My signature certifies that the above information is correct and that no unapproved procedures will be used on this study.

➢ U of T Office of Research Ethics accepts e-mailed or scanned submissions as long as it is sent from a faculty researcher’s/supervisor’s institutional e-mail account. Please send the completed documents via e-mail to ethics.review@utoronto.ca.

Signature of Investigator: ____________________________ Date:

AND (if applicable):

Signature of Faculty Supervisor/Sponsor: ____________________________ Date:

Instructions:

A suspension of approval may occur if we do not receive the annual renewal form at least 14 days before date of expiry. Suspension of approval may have implications for administration of funds and compliance with University policy. You may email your Annual Renewal Form to ethics.review@utoronto.ca or fax it to 416.946.5763. You may also drop off one hardcopy of the form to our office at the address listed in the footer.
# Appendix H

## Table H APQN and INQAAHE Members in Asia and the Pacific

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership</th>
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</table>

\(^{36}\) Recently AUQA was merged with TEQSA.

\(^{37}\) TEQSA has not been a member of APQN, but recently it merged with AUQA.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
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(APQN, 2011c; INQAAHE, 2011)
## Appendix I

### Table I Timeline of Sponsored Workshops and Conferences

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name of Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>July 2005</strong></td>
<td>AUQA Workshop in conjunction of Australian Universities Quality Forum “Engaging Communities”</td>
<td>AUQA, Melbourne, Australia</td>
<td>250 participants, 8 APQN sponsored attendees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>July 2005</strong></td>
<td>Workshop on accreditation</td>
<td>AACCUP, Manila, Philippines</td>
<td>8 attended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>August 2005</strong></td>
<td>Workshop on Quality Management of QA Agencies</td>
<td>Ulanbataar, Mongolia</td>
<td>4 foreign sponsored attendees (Indonesia, Việt Nam, Cambodia, Malaysia), 35 Mongolians attended</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>September 2005</strong></td>
<td>Training of External Reviewers</td>
<td>Phnom Penh, Cambodia</td>
<td>9 sponsored places, trainers from NAAC, India, and AUQA, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>November 2005</strong></td>
<td>AUQA hosted Auditor Training, 7th Annual Training workshop</td>
<td>Melbourne Australia</td>
<td>12 non-AUQA participants from APQN</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>January 2006</strong></td>
<td>Workshop on External QA</td>
<td>Hanoi, Việt Nam</td>
<td>46 Vietnamese participants; 12 observers, 5 of whom were sponsored foreign participants; two facilitators from AUQA (Australia) &amp; BAN-PT (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>June 2006</strong></td>
<td>World Bank Joint Client-Staff Learning Seminar</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>26 applicants applied for funding, four were sponsored by APQN (from Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Maldives)*</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>September 2006</strong></td>
<td>NAAC International Conference on Student Participation</td>
<td>NAAC, Bangalore, India</td>
<td>150 participants. 10 APQN delegates from Pakistan, Thailand, Mongolia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Việt Nam (2), Philippines APQN paid for 2 trainers from Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>Location</td>
<td>Participants/SpeakersRemarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2006</td>
<td>International Conference on Assessing Quality in Higher Education</td>
<td>HEC, APQN, &amp; UNESCO; Lahore, Pakistan</td>
<td>Seven participants/speakers from Japan, Samoa, Thailand, Malaysia, Việt Nam</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2007</td>
<td>Workshop on internal QA</td>
<td>Ho Chi Minh City, Việt Nam</td>
<td>Over 50 Vietnamese. Eight sponsored participants. Two trainers from AUQA &amp; Netherlands (NVAO) &amp; ECA Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2007</td>
<td>Development of Measurements for Quality Assurance</td>
<td>American University of Bangladesh &amp; UGC, Dhaka Bangladesh</td>
<td>10 sponsored participants, 4 self-sponsored from Pakistan; Trainers from QAAC (Sri Lanka) &amp; PAASCU (Philippines)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2007</td>
<td>Workshop on Theory of External QA &amp; its application to China</td>
<td>SEEI &amp; YHEEC, Kumming, China</td>
<td>45 Chinese participants, two foreign experts from PAASCU (Philippines) and Tony Davies (New Zealand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2007</td>
<td>Training Workshop for Accreditors</td>
<td>Manila, Philippines</td>
<td>8 sponsored participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2007</td>
<td>Workshop on QA</td>
<td>Vientienne, Lao PDR</td>
<td>60 Laotian participants. Speakers from Cambodia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, Hong Kong, UNESCO, SEAMEO RIHED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2007</td>
<td>Quality Audit Workshop</td>
<td>Suva, Fiji</td>
<td>36 participants from the University of the South Pacific and trainer from RMIT, Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2008</td>
<td>Workshop on Evaluation of Institutional Accreditation</td>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>In total, 40 participants, 16 from BAN-PT</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2008</td>
<td>Moderated Online Forum on Writing Audit/Evaluation/Accreditation Reports</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>Nick Harris (UK) convener &amp; three facilitators from Hong Kong, Australia and India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>62 participants from 16 member organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 2009</td>
<td>External Quality Assurance: Options for Higher Education Managers</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>66 participants from 13 countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2010</td>
<td>Training Workshop for Vietnamese</td>
<td>Bangkok, Thailand</td>
<td>11 participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 2010</td>
<td>International Information Package Pre-Conference Workshop</td>
<td>Bangkok, Thailand</td>
<td>77 participants</td>
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<td>October 2010</td>
<td>Best Practices in External Quality Assurance</td>
<td>Online</td>
<td>90 participants</td>
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(APQN, 2005a, 2007, 2008a, 2009b, 2010b, 2010c)
### Table J APQN Board Leadership 2005-2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
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<th>Country/Territory</th>
<th>Membership Type</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>2005-2006</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>HKCAA</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Mr. Peter PT Cheung</td>
<td>- Master in Business Administration, The Open University, Hong Kong</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Diploma in Management Studies, Kingston University, UK</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007-2011</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>PAASCU</td>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Mrs. Concepcion Pijano</td>
<td>- Master in Public Administration, Pace University, White Plains, New York, USA</td>
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<td>- Bachelor of Science in Education, St. Scholastica’s College, Manila Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>AUQA</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Dr. Antony Stella</td>
<td>- Ph.D. in Educational Technology, Bharathidasan University</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>- M.Sc. in Mathematics, University of Madras</td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005-</td>
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<td>NAAC</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Prof. VS Prasad</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
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<td>n.a.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007-</td>
<td>Vice-President</td>
<td>NIAD-UE</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Dr. Akihiko Kawaguchi</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
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<td>HKCAA</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Dorte Kristoffersen</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Master’s in Business Administration, Copenhagen Business School</td>
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<td>AUQA</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Dr. Antony Stella</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Vice-President</td>
<td>NAAC</td>
<td>India</td>
<td>Full</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Ph.D., Shivaji University, India</td>
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<td>Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005-</td>
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<td>AUQA</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>Full</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
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<td>MSc, University of East Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>2009</td>
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<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>DPhil, Oxford University</td>
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<tr>
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<td>SEEI</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Full</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>SEEI</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Full</td>
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<td>Secretary/Treasurer</td>
<td>SEEI</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Full</td>
<td>Ph.D. in Materials Science and Technology, Shanghai Institute of Ceramics, Chinese Academy of Sciences</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

(APQN, 2005a, 2007, 2008a, 2009b, 2010b, 2010c)
Appendix K

Criteria for APQN Membership

1. Provide documentation of the nature of the operations of the agency, such as legislation, letters of incorporation, annual reports and a work plan, to demonstrate that the agency is responsible for programmatic and institutional level quality assurance at the post-secondary level.
2. Present the mission statement and objectives of the organization that demonstrate consistency with the nature of the organization.
3. Agency staff, profiles, and job descriptions are consistent with the nature of the agency and its mission statement and objectives.
4. The profile of reviewers is also consistent with the nature of the agency and its mission statement and objectives.
5. Provide proof of the independence of the agency, showing through legislation and review manuals that third parties cannot change the decisions of the agency.
6. Show that the agency has the demonstrated resources necessary to fulfill its mission statement and objectives.
7. External quality assurance criteria and processes should be publicly available, such as the self-evaluation, site visit, peer review reports, and follow up activity.
8. Quality assurance mechanisms are in place in the organization so that periodic review is conducted.

(APQN, 2011c)
Appendix L

Table L Signed MOUs and MOCs within the APQN Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Who</th>
<th>Who</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 October, 2004</td>
<td>MOC</td>
<td>AUQA (Australia)</td>
<td>NZUAAU (New Zealand)</td>
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<td>31 January, 2005</td>
<td>MOC</td>
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<td>10 January 2006</td>
<td>MOU</td>
<td>AUQA (Australia)</td>
<td>NAAC (India)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 March 2006</td>
<td>MOU</td>
<td>HKCAA (Hong Kong)</td>
<td>SEEI (China)</td>
</tr>
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<td>November 5, 2008</td>
<td>MOC</td>
<td>PAASCU (Philippines)</td>
<td>SEEI (China)</td>
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<td>2008/2009</td>
<td>MOC</td>
<td>HKCAAVQ (Hong Kong)</td>
<td>QAA (UK)</td>
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<td>22 May 2009</td>
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<td>SEEI (China)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 June, 2009</td>
<td>MOU</td>
<td>ONESQA (Thailand)</td>
<td>HEEACT (Taiwan)</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2009</td>
<td>MOU</td>
<td>APQN</td>
<td>INQAAHE</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 July, 2009</td>
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<td>SEEI (China)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 August, 2009</td>
<td>MOU</td>
<td>AUQA (Australia)</td>
<td>MQA (Malaysia)</td>
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(APQN, 2005a, 2007, 2008a, 2009b, 2010b, 2010c)
**Appendix M**

**Table M Facilitators of Online Fora and Training Courses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forum Name</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Facilitators</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal Quality Assurance</td>
<td>April – August 2008</td>
<td>• Dorte Kristoffersen, HKCAAVQ, Hong Kong</td>
<td>69 participants from 13 countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Concepcion Pijano, PAASCU, Philippines</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Jagannath Patil, NAAC, India</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ponmudiraj Belavendram Selvadurai, NAAC, India (APQN, 2008)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing an Accreditation, Audit or Evaluation Report</td>
<td>December 2008 – March 2009</td>
<td>• Nick Harris, consultant, formerly at QAA, UK</td>
<td>62 participants from 16 countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Andrea Hope, Shue Yan University, Hong Kong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Robyn Adams, RMIT, Australia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• BS Ponmudiraj, NAAC, India</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practices in External Quality Assurance</td>
<td>October 2010 – November 2010</td>
<td>• Iring Wasser, AUQA, Australia</td>
<td>90 participants from 18 different countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Kamanto Sunarto, BAN-PT, Indonesia</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Hazman Shah Abdullah, <em>Universiti Teknologi MARA</em>, Malaysia</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Rama Kondapalli, UNRWA (associated with NAAC), India</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(APQN, 2009a, 2009b, 2010c; Harris, 2009; Northover, 2008; Wasser, 2010)

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38 The APQN Annual Report and the Evaluation Report have conflicting reports about the convener and facilitators. I have taken the Evaluation Report as the correct report.
### Appendix N

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Sending Organization/s</th>
<th>Receiving Organization</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-23 September 2005</td>
<td>Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU)</td>
<td>Accreditation Committee of Cambodia (ACC)</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-7 July 2006</td>
<td>PAASCU, Philippines</td>
<td>ACC, Cambodia</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-29 August 2008</td>
<td>Badan Akreditasi Nasional Perguruan Tinggi (BAN-PT), Indonesia</td>
<td>Australia Universities Quality Agency (AUQA)</td>
<td>Internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-23 August 2008</td>
<td>ACC, Cambodia</td>
<td>PAASCU, Philippines</td>
<td>Internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 September - 10 October 2008</td>
<td>University Grants Commission (UGC), Bangladesh; General Department of Evaluation, Testing and Accreditation, Việt Nam</td>
<td>PAASCU, Philippines</td>
<td>Internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-21 March 2009</td>
<td>UGC, Bangladesh; BAN-PT, Indonesia; Mongolian National Council for Education Accreditation; Vietnam National University</td>
<td>PAASCU, Philippines</td>
<td>Internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September to December, Round 1, 2010</td>
<td>UGC, Nepal</td>
<td>AUQA, Australia</td>
<td>Internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September to December, Round 1, 2010</td>
<td>Higher Education Commission, Pakistan</td>
<td>AUQA, Australia</td>
<td>Internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September to December, Round 1, 2010</td>
<td>Department of Higher Education, Lao PDR</td>
<td>Malasian Qualifications Agency (MQA)</td>
<td>Internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September to December, Round 1, 2010</td>
<td>Shanghai Education Evaluation Institute, China</td>
<td>PAASCU, Philippines</td>
<td>Internship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September to December, Round 2, 2010</td>
<td>National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), India</td>
<td>MQA, Malaysia</td>
<td>Internship</td>
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<tr>
<td>September to December, Round 2, 2010</td>
<td>MQA, Malaysia</td>
<td>AUQA, Australia</td>
<td>Internship</td>
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</table>
2010

| September to December, Round 2, 2010 | National Commission for Academic Assessment and Accreditation, Timor Leste | NAAC, India | Internship |

(APQN, 2005a, 2007, 2008a, 2009a, 2009b, 2010b, 2010c)
### Appendix O

**Table O APQN Projects and Participating Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Status</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Country of Organization</th>
<th>Participating Organizations</th>
<th>Individual Authors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td>Mutual Recognition of QA Agencies</td>
<td>2004-2011</td>
<td>Australia</td>
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<td>Dorte Kristoffersen</td>
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<td>Current</td>
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<td>LAN</td>
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<td>Jordan Cheung Jagannath Patil; BS Ponmudiraj</td>
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<td>AUQA</td>
<td>Liesha Northover</td>
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<td>Australia</td>
<td>AUQA</td>
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<td>Year</td>
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<td>Kapugamame Tillekeratne</td>
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<td>Sri Lanka</td>
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<td>Takahiro Saito; Takayuki Hayashi</td>
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<td>Sana Maeda</td>
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<td>Insung Jung</td>
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<td>Japan</td>
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<td>SoungHee Kim</td>
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<td>Antony Stella</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mongolia</td>
<td>The Mongolian National Council for Higher Education Accreditation (MNCEA)</td>
<td>Ms Chuluuntsetseg Dagvadorj</td>
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(APQN, 2011b)